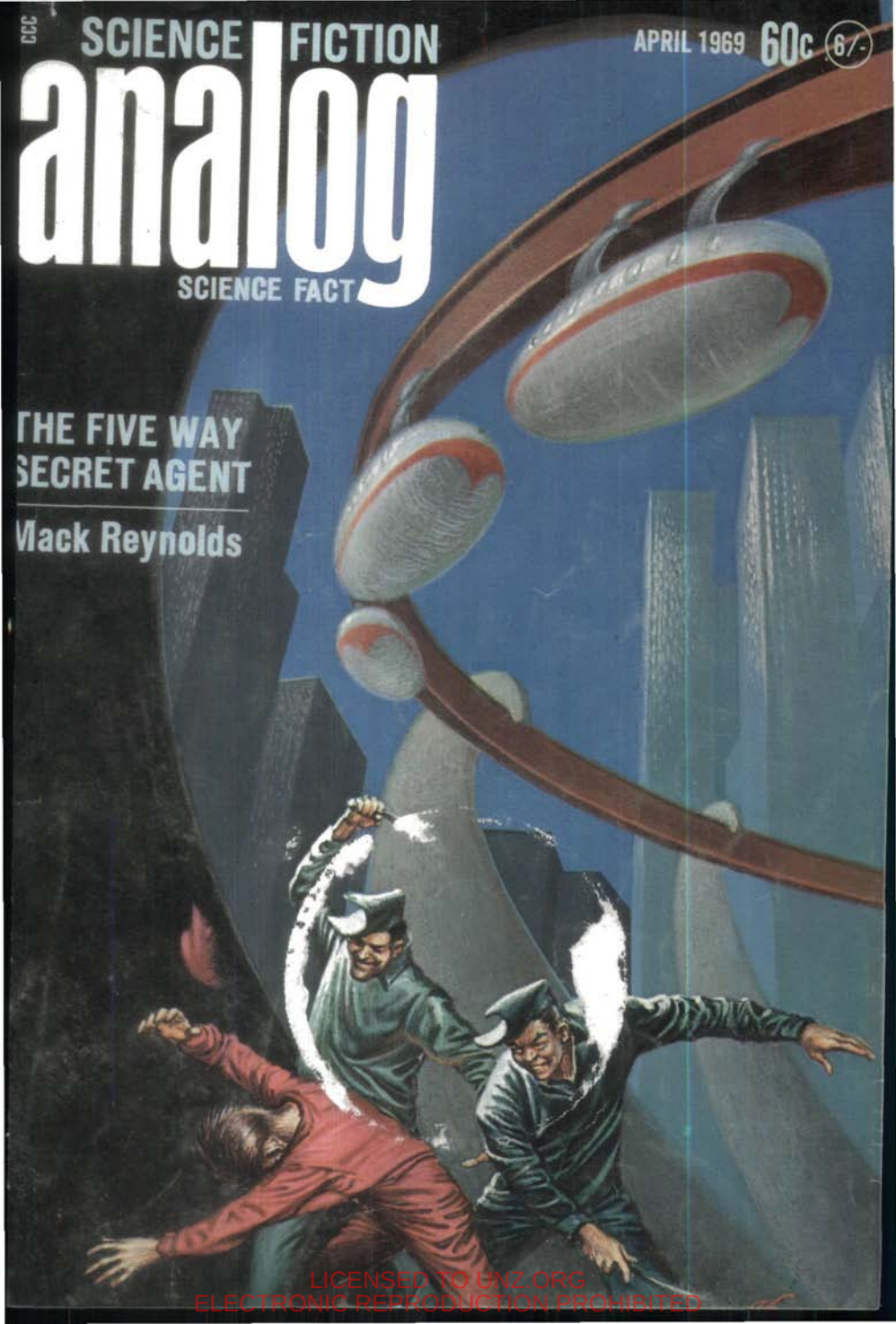

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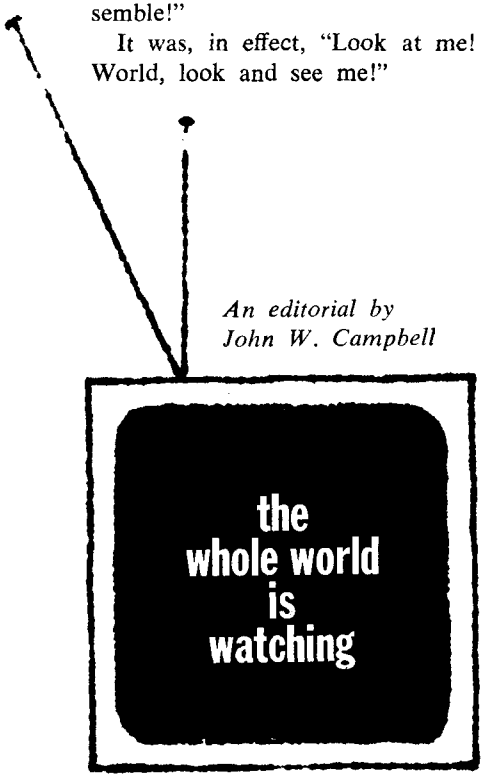
I watched the Hippie-Yippie invasion of Chicago during the Democratic Convention on television—as a large proportion of Americans did, of course. Their "battle cry" fascinated me at the time. "The Whole World Is Watching" was their repeated chant.

I thought at the time—and still think—that the implications of that are highly significant. It wasn't something like "Peace . . . Peace . . . Give Us Peace . . . Peace . . . Peace . . ." or "Freedom . . . Freedom . . . Freedom to Assemble!"

It was, in effect, "Look at me! World, look and see me!"



An editorial by
John W. Campbell

The United States has had a number of Presidential assassinations—and in each one, the motivation of the man who performed the suicidal assassination under such conditions that capture and execution were inevitable, was an insane desire for public attention. Each wanted—wanted with suicidal desperation—*to be noticed and heeded.* To be IMPORTANT.

Freud said that Sex and the Death Wish were the only human motivations; he's pretty obviously wrong, seeking to supersimplify the immense complexity of human motivation. Quite evidently one of the most powerful of human motivations is a *need to be noticed.* The less coherent, the less competent, the less effective the individual is in reality, the more desperately he needs, seeks, and yearns for Notice of His Importance.

The Hippie-Yippie group appears to have had hundreds or thousands of people individually so ineffective that they never achieved public notice and who were desperately anxious to be Noticed and Recognized As Important.

There's plenty of evidence that that motivation is great enough to drive individuals to suicidally risky action. Such individuals will, quite literally, do *anything,* however dangerous or degrading, to achieve public notice. The "Notice me!" motivation lies behind a number of suicides, particularly the twenty-fifth-story-window-jumper type

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who spends a few hours on a window ledge attracting a crowd. Most of them manage to get argued back off the ledge; I suggest that one strong and effective argument might be "If you jump, you won't be able to see the story in tomorrow's papers."

The essential point is—that wasn't, as claimed, a demonstration for any Great Political Truth—it was a tantrum of the same order as a small child's screaming tantrum when he isn't being noticed and heeded by his parents. "Look at me! Pay attention to *me!*" Their chant of "The Whole World Is Watching" clarifies their simple, utterly egocentric motivation.

Fundamentally the same motivation as a small child smashing Mama's crockery to make her heed him. Or Oswald—John Wilkes Booth—the whole line of American President assassins, who so desperately wanted to be Important that they committed their attention-demanding acts.

The Suffragettes, when they were trying to get the vote for women, quite deliberately smashed His Majesty's post boxes for the sole purpose of being arrested *and noticed*. Being reasonably sane young women, they were fully aware of the exact reason for doing what they did—their destructive acts were for the purpose of compelling the politicians, who preferred to ignore them, to do *something* about it.

The Hippie-Yippie group came thousands of miles to Chicago for the specific purpose of being Noticed. But their battle cry wasn't "Peace!" or "Votes for Something!" —it was a gleeful, soul-exulting cry of, "The Whole World Is Watching!"

Individually, personally incompetent to earn public respect and attention, they sought by massive destructive behavior to compel attention.

Much of that situation underlay the points I made some years ago, in the editorial "The Mobsters"—December 1964—pointing out that mobs are usually organized by a group of skilled manipulators to achieve a purpose—by no means necessarily the alleged purpose of the mob. The real mobsters aren't the suckers that get pushed in to provide martyrs—they're the organizers.

But the organizer-mobster leaders want martyrs—bleeding, preferably in full color, before the public. (A slight nosebleed, properly smeared around, can make a spectacular show on color TV.)

With these motivational forces in the background, let's consider those Chicago riots.

A large group of several thousand Yippies had come to Chicago for the exclusive purpose of getting public attention. They came to Chicago because they knew there

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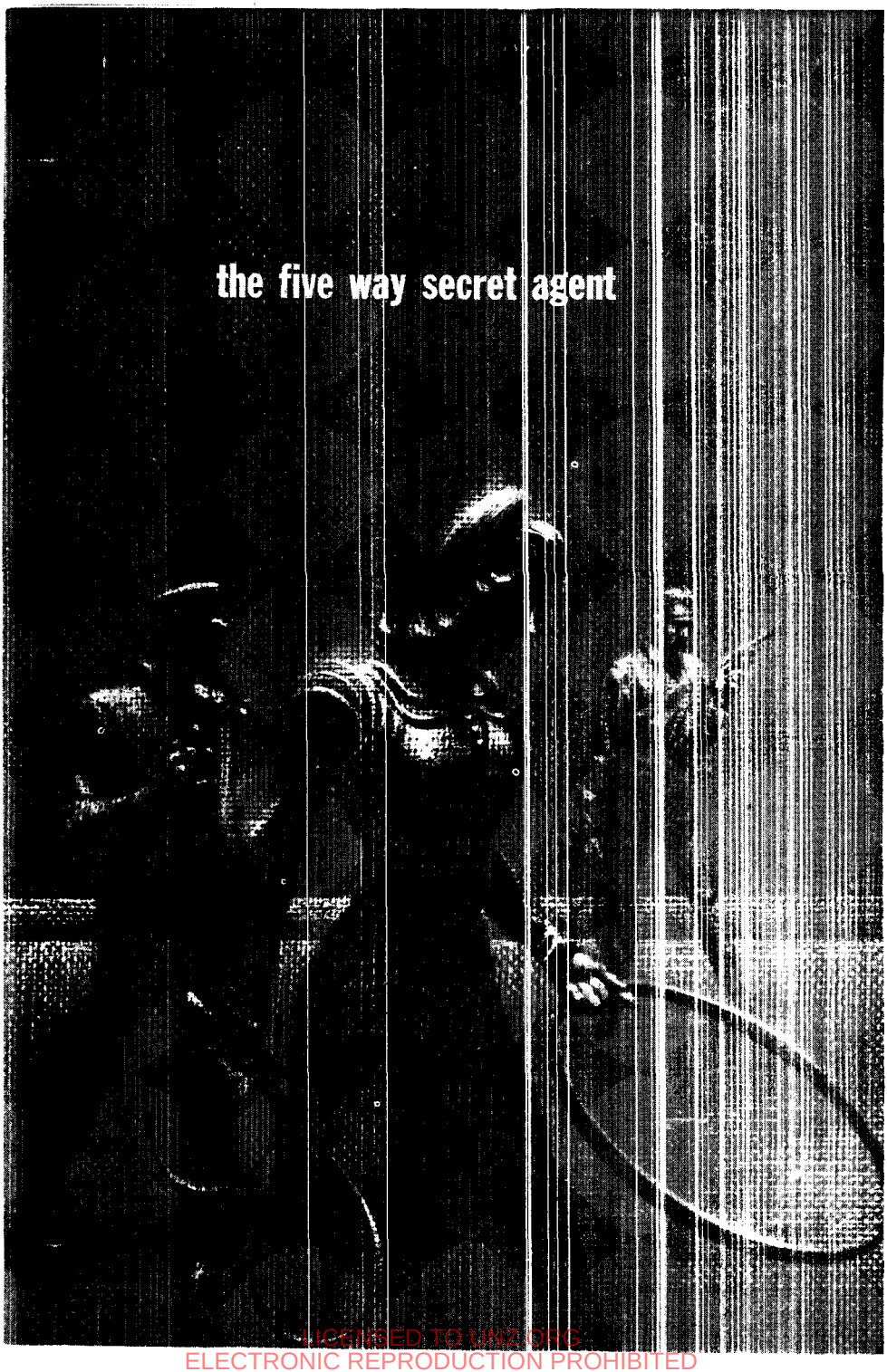

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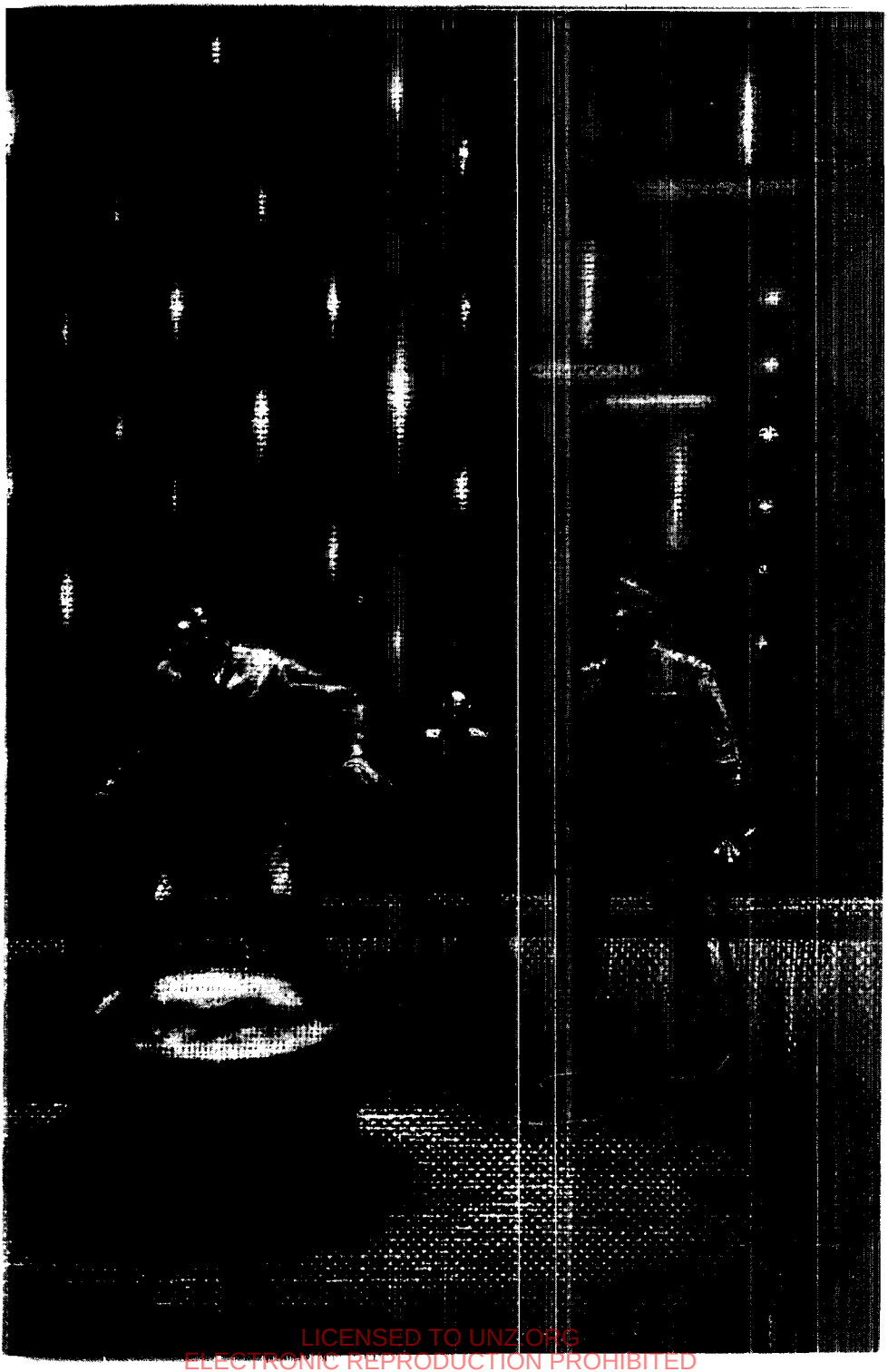

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Part One of Two Parts.

If you're trapped as a pawn in a game as complex as chess, you have only one hope: If you can reach that last square you become the most powerful piece on the board!

MACK REYNOLDS

Illustrated by Kelly Freas

I

Rex Bader took down two bottles from the medicine cabinet in his efficiency bath and shook out one pill and one capsule. He looked at the capsule in distaste. Theoretically, there was no aftereffect but that was theory. Speed up the pace at which you could assimilate learning and when the effect of the medication wore off you had a somewhat drugged feeling, a hangover if you will. The pill seemed to be of another nature, perception was broader, insight quicker and he was darned if he could find any payoff otherwise. Rex Bader was no pharmacologist but he understood the second drug was distantly related to mescaline.

He washed them both down with water, went over to his desk in that corner of the mini-apartment's living cum bedroom which he called his library, sat down before the TV library booster screen and put his student's headphones over his ears. He ran a finger over the typer keyboard, sighed and dialed for his lesson in Spanish for that day.

He flicked the activating button and tuned in on the school's central computer-teacher.

He progressed fairly slowly at the beginning, memorizing when memorizing was called for, recited when drawn upon for pronouncing practice. He was called up abruptly several times on this. At the age of thirty-odd without any other language background beyond English, Rex Bader had his troubles with such matters as rolling his "r's" and mastering the Castilian lisp.

As the pill and capsule he had swallowed took effect he sped up the lessons and then sped them up again.

And was irritated when the door buzzed.

He looked over at the identity screen and saw an unknown there. A very natty, impressive and pros-

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perous looking unknown, but an unknown.

Rex Bader sighed, removed his headset, left the lesson he was currently at on the screen and got up to answer the door.

Outside, ultra-expensive appearing briefcase in hand, the other emanated still more prosperity. In fact, Rex Bader decided inwardly, this was possibly the most *affluent* looking character he had ever run into. Not that the other was ostentatious in dress, he was just rich in dress and Rex wondered vaguely where one acquired the gentle gray material of the other's suit; England probably. Wherever you acquired it citizens on Rex Bader's economic level didn't.

The newcomer said, "Mr. Rex Bader? My name is Temple Norman."

"O.K. Come in. What can I do for you?" Rex led the way to the living-room couch which converted into a bed during the night hours, motioned the other to be seated and took his own place in his comfort chair.

Temple Norman put his briefcase on his knees, activated the opening mechanism and dipped in for a handful of facsimiles. He flicked quickly through the sheaf, nodded several times and said, "Of course."

It was too early in the day to offer the other a drink from the autobar. Rex cleared his throat and said, making a slight gesture at the papers, "What's that, if you don't mind my asking?"

The other looked up. "Your dossier, from the National Data Banks, Mr. Bader."

"My dossier! What are you doing with my dossier? Are you an official of the computer-data banks?"

Temple Norman shook his beautifully barbered head. "No. However, Mr. Bader, it is possible, though somewhat expensive, to secure any person's dossier if one has the proper connections."

"And you have the proper connections to pry into my personal life, eh?"

"The enterprises for which I work do, Mr. Bader."

Rex took a breath. "All right. Let's get to the point. What can I do for you?"

"Perhaps you will be offered employment, but a few questions first, if you will." He looked about the mini-apartment, his nostrils held slightly high. Rex Bader waited him out. The other had impressive nostrils, very aristocratic.

"First of all, Mr. Bader, under Meritocracy, pragmatism is the word. Your I.Q. and your education would indicate a man of potential abilities. However, your establishment would indicate that you exist on a level little different from that of an unemployed living on NIT, his Negative Income Tax."

Rex said patiently, "Mr. Norman,

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three things are needed to make your place under Meritocracy. One, a reasonably high I.Q.; two, a reasonably good education . . ."

"And three?" the other said, frowning slightly, as though he hadn't known there was a third.

Rex said, "The term I.Q. as we usually use it these days is a misnomer. Our psychologists do not really assess all-round intelligence, there is no such thing. What they assess are the qualities needed to benefit from a higher education. And the early I.Q. tests have been augmented with others that check out your verbal ability and fluency, your spatial ability, numerical ability, perceptual ability, memory ability, driving ability, accident proneness, digital dexterity, analogizing power, mechanical aptitude, clerical aptitude, emotional maturity, tone discrimination, sexual attraction even, taste sensitivity, color blindness, accuracy, persistence, neurosis, and powers of observation. But there is just one thing they don't and can't test, and that's the third thing needed to succeed under Meritocracy."

The other was still frowning his puzzlement.

Rex said, "Luck."

"Ah. And you feel that fortune has passed you by?"

"Let's say, so far. I'm still trying. When I got out of the university, Mr. Norman, I studied aviation with the intent of becoming a pilot."

"A most unfortunate choice."

"Wasn't it though? By the time I graduated from the air school, practically all aircraft were automated. Those jobs that still were left went to old-timers, highly experienced veteran pros. So I went back to school and took some more courses which I figured would wind me up doing chores for the petroleum industries."

"I see. Undoubtedly just in time for the introduction of cheap power from nuclear sources."

"Right. So that was the second field that technology did me out of. Next time, I decided, I'd be too smart for them and get into something technology wouldn't touch. I'd always been an inveterate reader of suspense, detective and international intrigue novels since I was a boy reading Ian Fleming and John D. MacDonald. So I took courses that led to my being able to apply for a private investigator's license. And that's where I am now."

"Collecting Negative Income Tax?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Why? Because there's practically no demand for private investigators. With the coming of the universal credit card and the cashless-checkless use of the pseudo dollar, ninety-five cases out of a hundred that a private detective used to deal with have been eliminated. Crime, as we knew it in the

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old days, has practically been erased. We don't even have many divorce cases any more. How can you have divorce if so few bother to marry these days?"

"I see. And you have given up, then?"

"No. My detective shingle is still out but on the side I'm studying various other subjects."

The other looked down at the dossier in his lap. "So I see. Spanish among others. Why?"

Rex shrugged impatiently. "Because although aviation in the States is almost universally automated there are still some of the more backward countries, especially in South America, where our corporations still utilize human pilots."

"Then you don't object to work abroad?"

"I don't object to work anywhere."

"Not even in the Soviet Complex, Mr. Bader?"

Rex looked at him.

The immaculate Mr. Norman coughed gently and said, "But that can come later. Now then, I note that you have no political affiliations."

"I stopped having interest in politics when I decided there was no difference between the major parties and they had so sewed up election laws that an emerging third party was all but impossible."

"Um-m-m, um-m-m. Unmarried. No close relatives. Moderate user of alcoholic beverages."

"Tell me what's all this about?"

Mr. Norman ignored the question and looked up and said, "Mr. Bader, what do you think of Meritocracy as a socio-economic system?"

"I don't know. What is there to think about it? I can't come up with any alternative. I only wish I was a little higher on the totem pole, is all."

The newcomer suddenly stuffed his sheaf of papers back into his briefcase and flicked the button that closed the automatic zipper. He came to his feet.

"Very well, let us be on our way."

Rex said, "Do you mind if I ask you where and why?"

"Yes."

Rex Bader made a gesture of resignation with his two hands. "O.K. I suppose it's all in a day's work and Lord knows I can use work. Wait'll I get my jacket. You realize, of course, that I charge by the hour and under these circumstances my time starts as of right now."

"If you are found suitable for the assignment, Mr. Bader, you will be recompensed beyond your dreams of avarice. If you are not found suitable, your time will be paid for at your customary fee—at least."

"Them's mighty pretty words, Stranger," Rex Bader muttered under his breath as he sought out his jacket.

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At the elevator banks, Rex Bader turned to the other. "What level?" he said.

"Street level," Norman told him. "My vehicle is parked there."

His vehicle yet, Rex thought, shrugging inwardly. He said into the elevator's phone screen, "Street level."

"Street level," the robot voice answered and the compartment began to rise.

At the street level Temple Norman led the way. When they emerged from the entrance he selected, he looked up at the one-hundred-and-ten-story, aluminum-sheathed twin towers of the high-rise apartment building.

"Tell me, Mr. Bader. Why have you chosen to reside on the eighth level below ground when it would seem to me the apartments above —the higher the better—would be the more desirable? I would estimate that a building of this magnitude would afford at least two thousand apartments of various sizes; surely yours must be one of the least attractive so far as location is concerned."

"It is," Rex said wryly. "It is also one of the cheapest. I'm down on the service levels along with the ultra-market and the garages and theaters. But the rent on my mini-apartment is less than half what it would be on any of the top ten levels. When you're on NIT, you watch your pseudo-dollars."

"I see," the other said, nostrils slightly high again. "Here we are."

Rex Bader did a double take. The electro-steamer limousine was obviously not only privately owned, but was chauffeur-driven. As a city dweller, Rex Bader seldom saw a privately owned car; he had never before seen a chauffeur-driven one that he could recall.

The uniformed flunky had popped from his position behind the controls upon their approach, now he held the back door open for them. When they were seated, he scurried around to his place again.

"Return to the offices, Martin," Temple Norman told him.

"Very good, sir." The electro-steamer smoothed into motion, under manual control.

Rex said to the driver, "The nearest entry is straight ahead about a half kilometer."

"Yes, sir," the chauffeur said, "I know." There was a slightly supercilious element in his tone.

What is it about the servants of the very rich, Rex asked himself, that some of the superiority complex of their employers rubs off on them?

Rex said to Temple Norman, in the way of make-conversation, "I thought it was against the rules to bring a privately owned vehicle into a pseudo-city."

They were proceeding through the acres of parks and playgrounds which surrounded his house.

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"Against the rules, Mr. Bader, but one is able to surmount rules if one has the proper connections, though it is somewhat expensive."

"I'm beginning to suspect that you have proper connections," Rex said wryly.

The driver pulled up to the entry of the ultra-expressway and skillfully came to a halt on a dispatcher. He reached to the dashboard and dialed what was obviously their destination, then relaxed back into the seat—if relaxed you could call it. His hands were folded in his lap, in an almost military posture. One hell of a way to make a living, Rex decided sourly.

The auto-controls of the underground ultra-expressway took over and within minutes they were up to a three-hundred-kilometer clip.

They rode in silence for possibly half an hour and then the speed of the electro-steamer began to fall off.

"Why me?" Rex said.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Obviously, you could afford to hire anyone in the country for whatever this mysterious assignment of yours is. So why me?"

"We put our requirements on the computers, Mr. Bader. You were selected. Several others, as well, so that we have a choice, but thus far you seem to fill our needs. We shall see."

Their speed dropped still farther and shortly they branched off the main road, went on three or four kilometers, and took a still smaller branch. Another half a kilometer and they came to an entry and the vehicle came to a halt on a dispatcher.

Martin took over the controls again and they proceeded, remaining underground.

The road was evidently a private one and shortly they entered a building and came up before an entrance. The building was obviously sizable, very recent, and damnably expensive. A doorman, uniformed like nothing so much as a Bulgarian admiral, opened up for them and said, "Good afternoon, Mr. Norman."

Temple Norman nodded to him distantly and moved toward the entry, very brisk. No one else seemed to be around. Rex Bader got the impression that this was a private entrance, in spite of its magnitude and swank. All over again, he was impressed.

Inside, there were only two elevators. Rex followed his guide inside one of them.

"Penthouse," Norman said.

"The penthouse. Yes, sir," the robot voice said.

The compartment accelerated, accelerated again, accelerated again, then after what seemed a fantastically long time, slowed, slowed, came to a halt.

Rex cleared his throat. "This must be a high one."

"Yes."

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They emerged into what would seem a private establishment, rather than offices. Once again, no one seemed to be around.

"This way," Temple Norman murmured.

As they went along an ornate hallway, Temple Norman looked at Rex from the side of his eyes. "You are a detective. Have you detected anything as yet, Mr. Bader?"

"Yes. You aren't the boss. You're a secretary, or something. We're on the way to see the boss. We're going by a route so as to avoid anyone seeing me."

"Ah, I'm impressed. And who is the boss?"

"Evidently, one of the richest men in the United States."

"No," Temple Norman smiled. "You are wrong there, Mr. Bader."

They approached a heavy door and Rex Bader's guide stood before its identity screen and murmured something. The door opened.

And Rex Bader stepped into the most attractive room in which he had ever been in his life.

Without ostentation whatsoever, it yielded every comfort of which a man in his middle years could have conceived. Large, without being overly so, its windows overlooked a breathtaking distance of forests and streams and with mountains in the far beyond. The furniture was solely for comfort, not for decoration as was so often the case these days. The paintings ignored the current realistic-abstraction school and half a dozen schools that had gone before; in fact, the most recent was evidently a Degas and Rex Bader had the feeling that it was an original. There were bookshelves with real books, an anachronism in these days of computer library banks.

It came as a mild surprise that there seemingly was no TV screen, phone or otherwise, in the room. Nor, for that matter, any sort of a delivery-box compartment, leading up from the ultra-market which Rex assumed was in the cellar of the building. This was a room out of yesteryear and obviously an escape sanctum.

The sole occupant looked up from the heavy leather chair in which he sat and put his book to one side. He came to his feet, a man of possibly fifty-five and obviously in the best trim one can be in at that age. He was about Rex Bader's height and build, pushing two meters, pushing eighty kilos and only a touch of gray at temples prevented his hair from being as full and dark as Rex's own. He had a piercing, quizzical quality about his open face and a no-nonsense air. However, his personality projected itself across the room and seized you. He had a likableness even before he had opened his mouth.

He was dressed informally in what would seem well used sports

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clothes, even to golf shoes upon his feet. He came forward easily, stretched out a hand to be shaken.

"Mr. Rex Bader, of course."

Rex shook hands.

"My name is Westley, Mr. Bader. That will suffice for the time. My dear Temple, drinks if you will. Be seated, Mr. Bader."

Temple Norman said to Rex, "What would you prefer?"

Rex found a chair, across from the one that Westley had been occupying and said, "Whiskey's fine for me. On rocks."

Norman said, "Pseudo-whiskey, or real Scotch?"

"Pseudo-whiskey's all right with me. If anything, I prefer its taste."

There was a slight curl to Temple Norman's lips as he made his way toward the old-fashioned bar which occupied a goodly portion of one corner of the room. He said to Westley, "Sir?"

Westley said gently, "Pseudo-whiskey is fine. I agree with Mr. Bader. We turn out better potables as products of our laboratories today than the Scots ever dreamed possible. Drinking the old stuff is a status symbol. I don't need status symbols."

Norman coughed, even as he reached for bottle and glasses. "Yes, sir. I feel the same way, of course."

Westley took his chair again and looked at Rex Bader. "Mr. Bader," he said, "what do you think of world government?"

That curve had come a bit fast. Rex said cautiously, "I think it's a great idea but I doubt if I'll live to see it."

"To the contrary, my dear Bader, it exists today, at least in embryo."

"Well, O.K., if you mean the Reunited Nations."

But Westley was waggling a finger negatively at him. "No, of course not. The League of Nations, the United Nations and its development, the Reunited Nations, were not capable of being steps toward a real world government. An organization of sovereign national states is not a satisfactory base for world government."

Rex looked at him blankly.

Temple Norman brought the drinks and handed them around, and sank into a chair to one side.

Westley said, very earnestly, "Each of the members of the Reunited Nations in any real crisis behaves as a sovereign national state, in accord with its conception of its own interests. Every debate, every speech, every vote, reflects this fact. Anyone who listened to the debates over the Asian War will testify that not a single state put the international order before its own national interests, nor was it capable of so doing. The state by its very nature of acting in its own national interests cannot perform otherwise. Unfortunate as it might be, there is no evidence that an enduring effective international

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order can be built on the political unit we know as the national state."

Rex took a sip of his drink, found it superlative. He put his glass down on the small table to his right and said, "Forgive me, I seem to be missing something here. You spoke of world government."

Westley nodded, sipped his own drink and likewise put it aside.

He said, "The modern national state isn't as old an institution as many believe. Some authorities put its origin at the time of the Reformation, others as late as the French Revolution which was the final blow to European feudalism. The primary definition of the national state is that it can protect its citizens from external attack and maintain internal order. The emphasis upon protection from external aggression has most clearly set the tone and defined the character of the modern national state, Mr. Bader. Nationalism, and all that goes with it, requires the ability to keep the state absolutely sovereign. Fear of conquest governs the political attitude of all national states toward the rest of the world.

"The many treaties, alliances, mutual defense pacts, disarmament conferences, peace congresses, understandings and international courts undertaken for security considerations have all come a cropper in time. The history of the sovereign national state is a bloody one and will continue to be if allowed to go on. A state absolutely sovereign as Thomas Hobbes saw it—accepting no infringements on its rights, confined in a geographic boundary, beset by enemies equally sovereign, equally ambitious and presumably equally well or better armed—could only be at war or preparing for war. The national state system is intrinsically unstable and the prospect of war is ever present. The present balance of terror, between those states which possess nuclear weapons and the means by which to deliver them, does not change this basic fact."

Rex said carefully, "I am not completely unacquainted with the works of Frank Tannenbaum, Mr. Westley."

The other's eyebrows rose and he looked over at Temple Norman. "I think possibly we have found our man, my dear Temple."

The younger man nodded. "You'll recall, sir, that this dossier revealed him to be the son of Professor Bader, the political economist. We could have assumed that some of his father's learning would, ah, rub off on him."

Westley looked back at the private investigator. "Very well, you recognize the source of much of the background material I am giving you. It will speed things up. Suffice to say that in the present situation in a world of nationalism where the national state, great or small, can no longer protect its own from annihilation, where all

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of the myths, boasts and cheering that go with the idea of political nationalism have lost their meaning that we can no longer look to prevailing institutions to stave off eventual catastrophe. Even the great powers are hopeless in this regard though they believe they have the ability to inflict such retaliatory damage as to make an attack too expensive; a belief based upon a balance of terror and upon the assumption that men of reason are in control of the instruments that could speed the deadly bombs into space. As a basis for permanent international peace both of these assumptions reflect a naïve optimism. The peace of the world must, in the end, rest on an institutional base that is indifferent to the idea of national security."

Rex Bader took up his glass again and took an unhappy pull at it. He said, "Such a base as what? Frankly, you seem to be talking in circles."

"Extra-national institutions, Mr. Bader."

Rex Bader thought about it. "You mean such as the International Red Cross, religious bodies such as the Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, the Jewish and Mohammedan Churches, the various scientific bodies?"

But the older man was shaking his head. "Those are examples of extra-national institutions; I had in mind the cosmocorps."

Rex Bader frowned puzzlement.

"The extra-national corporate body, the multinational corporation. They are supra-national in their very existence, plan and purpose. Their governors, managers, authorities think in extra-national terms and their personnel is indifferent to the national state except as an impediment. Its ownership is irrelevant for the owners do not either manage or control it except in legal fiction and it can be owned by people all over the earth. Its management is drawn from wherever competence is found, its technical personnel and its labor force can be completely international. Its total commitment is extra-national. It has no concern with national interest, boundaries, local culture, or regional idiosyncrasies, except as to how they might interfere with the performance of its functions.

"Take either an international communications company or an international airline. They are indifferent to national boundaries and unconcerned about national security. Their servants are only involved in fulfilling a function wherever it needs to be satisfied, be it in Argentina, Australia, Alaska, or Andorra. The personnel come from all lands. The questions that bother the national state—security, national interest, tariffs, customs, fear of invasion, border violations—are to the communications company and the airlines matters of irrita-

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tion or indifference. The same applies to the international bank, to many of the large commercial and distributing companies such as Shell, Standard Oil, Unilever, Philip's Lamp and many others."

Temple Norman put in quietly, "Every year that goes by sees more of the large corporations becoming cosmocorps. IBM, Ford, General Motors, Woolworth, the list goes on and on. They are no longer simply American corporations, they are truly international, in ownership as well as operation."

"Correct," Westley nodded, without looking in the direction of his underling.

"All right, O.K.," Rex Bader said quietly. "I'm with you, so far. Go on."

Westley took a sip from his drink.

"The cosmocorps is autonomous within the bounds of the states in which it operates, drawing its materials, capital, personnel, skills from wherever it can find them. It is at the service of the states in which it operates but is not of them. Its life will go on whatever the local governments might have happen to them, when the state has changed its nature through revolution, merger, annexation, defeat or whatever.

"The International Communications Corporation for instance will continue no matter what the political map might look like twenty years from now, since its functional service is more durable. The cosmocorps, in its own way, is sovereign. And especially it can be seen among the smaller nations that the national states are becoming dependent upon it. Dependent upon international banking for industrial development, on international airlines for transport, on communications corporations, on profits from oil leases, mineral rights and so forth.

"The world is shrinking with the present speed of communications, the increased mobility and proliferation of the sciences, with all but immediate transportation. We have today an industrialized world held together by the cosmocorps. We are rapidly coming to the point where the majority of persons employed work for one cosmocorps or the other and owe their functional loyalties to these supra-national corporate bodies, unrelated to the national states of which they are citizens."

Rex Bader said, "O.K. But what has this got to do with world government?" although he could more or less feel what was coming.

"What seems obvious is that we are building to a new supra-national order based not on the state with its obsession with national security but upon the extra-national bodies that are enveloping men and states over most of the world. In this new world, security can be bypassed and the national

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state can be left the police powers for internal civil needs, and to handle its other internal problems. The many cosmocorps are daily growing in strength, Mr. Bader, and they can no longer put up with war and the threat of war; they interfere with efficient functioning."

Rex Bader finished his drink and put the glass down. He looked from one to the other of the two cosmocorps men. "O.K.," he said. "I suppose the time has come to ask the big question. Where do I come in?"

Westley nodded. "Of course. The thing is, my dear Bader, that there are elements in the world today that wish to thwart this trend for whatever personal or selfish reasons. If the movement toward a world government based on the cosmocorps, a supra-national organization, is to continue and eventually triumph we must bring all international bodies together. All."

Rex Bader looked at Temple Norman. "You asked me whether or not I could object to working in the Soviet Complex."

Westley looked at his underling quizzically. Temple Norman flushed.

Westley said, "Temple seems to have jumped the gun a bit. However, briefly, Mr. Bader, we want you to act as our liaison man with our equal numbers behind what was once called the Iron Curtain."

II

Rex Bader looked at him. "I assume the Soviet Complex government is one of the elements that is not particularly interested in seeing the development of this supranational organization based on the international corporation."

Westley said, "Undoubtedly there are elements in the government of the Soviet Complex who would be opposed to this trend. Would you like another drink, Mr. Bader?"

"I'll bet there are," Rex said grimly. "No thanks. Tell me, are there elements in the American government against this trend?"

"I'm sure there are."

Rex said, "Look. Offhand, can you name *any* government of any national state that is in favor of this trend you claim?"

"The knowledgeable citizens of national states of smaller size, those who would be pawns in the game if nuclear holocaust was precipitated are desperately in search of some means of getting out of the current international rat race."

"I don't doubt it, but you didn't answer my question," Rex said. He came to his feet and took a deep breath. "No thanks. As a private operative, I'm willing to take reasonable risks. But bucking the Soviet government, *plus* the American government, *plus* every other government in the world, doesn't come under the head of making much sense to me."

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Westley said softly, "You didn't ask what the remuneration would be. I understand you subsist now on NIT, your Negative Income Tax."

"I don't want to know what the remuneration would be," Rex said grimly. "It might make me silly enough to change my mind. Thanks for the drink. Could somebody tell me how to get out of here?"

"Are you a coward?" Temple Norman blurted.

Rex looked at him and snorted. "Why don't you take the job?" he asked.

The impeccable Temple Norman was flustered. "I . . . I don't have the qualifications."

"Neither do I," Rex snapped. "I don't know what qualifications you thought you found when you bribed somebody to release my National Data Banks dossier to you but participating in what amounts to overthrowing the governments of every nation in the world isn't among them."

Westley sighed in resignation and stood also. He said, still projecting an aura of friendliness, "Mr. Bader, please think it over. In view of your present feelings I will not disclose further details. However, we did not expect to send you in without proper cover and safeguard measures. Meanwhile, you will find what I am sure you will feel adequate remuneration for your time here this afternoon transferred to your credit account."

"There is no bill," Rex said. "I haven't done anything. And I doubt that I'll be changing my mind."

Temple Norman said, "I'll see that a vehicle is summoned so that you can return to your . . . quarters, Mr. Bader."

Rex looked at him. "I'd sooner stick to my mini-apartment *quarters* than wind up in a ditch somewhere in the Ukraine," he growled.

He mulled it over for a couple of days, unhappily. In truth, it was the first really sizable assignment he had been offered as a private investigator. And it was, undoubtedly, his big chance, his introduction into the ranks of the Meritcrats. Whatever the assignment amounted to, it would, undoubtedly, have led to still others equally remunerative. What had Temple Norman said? Pay beyond his dreams of avarice. Rex Bader had some far-reaching dreams of avarice.

He was mildly surprised that the others hadn't contacted him again. However, he would still have rejected the offer. He could just see himself playing cat and mouse with the Soviet espionage-counter-espionage organization. Hell, he didn't even speak Russian. Why had they pulled his name out of the box?

He wasn't able to concentrate on his Spanish or other lessons, pills or no pills.

In disgust, on the second day he went on up to the street level and out into the extensive parks, which surrounded the high-rise

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apartment building in which he lived, for a walk. Why couldn't he get some nice simple job such as finding a wayward teen-age girl who had run away from the home of doting parents?

Why? he growled inwardly. Because in this day of the universal identity and credit card built into your pocket TV phone, there was no such thing as a runaway teenager. The police, through the computers, could get an immediate fix on any pocket phone and locate the person with that identity number to within a few square yards. And it wasn't a matter of throwing away your pocketphone, either. You couldn't exist in the modern world without your combination pocket TV phone, credit card, identity number. You couldn't so much as buy a bar of candy or ride an underground, not to speak of purchasing a meal in an auto-cafeteria or renting a hotel room.

He strode through the park, which was comparatively empty this time of day, though in the playground areas there were quite a few yelling children. He avoided the playgrounds, wondering grumpily why the kids weren't in their homes, going to school, or at their TV screens.

Two strangers fell into step with him, one on each side. He hadn't noticed from whence they had materialized.

They were as expensively dressed as had been Temple Norman the other day, but not quite so impeccably, perhaps. They were an efficient looking pair but not of the same type of efficiency as the cosmocorpsman. In fact, there was a certain heavy air about them, as though they lacked that elusive something once called breeding. They were, possibly, in their late twenties and built almost identically, both being about ten kilos more than Rex Bader.

The one on the right said conversationally, "Hello, Rex."

Rex Bader looked from one of the two to the other and back. He said, "O.K. Now we've established that you know my name. Let's go on."

The one on the left said, his voice flat, "You can call me Harry, and that's Luis."

"O.K. What's up Harry and Luis?"

Luis said, "Let's sit down on this bench."

There was a metal park bench set back from the road.

Rex Bader said, "Why?"

Luis said, "Do we look like a couple of clowns? Because it seems like a good idea, that's why."

Rex Bader said, "O.K." He sat down on the bench and crossed his legs. "It's your rubber band, start stretching it."

The one called Harry brought his TV phone from an inner jacket pocket, flicked the cover back and said something into the screen

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that Rex didn't get. He closed the phone, which resembled a leather covered cigarette case and returned it to his pocket.

Rex said, "What's it all about, gentlemen?"

"Search me," Luis said, pleasantly enough. "We have a little wait."

"Wait for what?"

"You'll see."

Rex began to come to his feet.

Harry said, his voice even. "No."

Rex began to say dangerously, "Look here . . ."

But at that moment an electro-steamer limousine smoothed up to a stop before them. For the second time that week, Rex Bader witnessed a privately owned, chauffeur-driven vehicle, illegally being driven in a pseudo-city.

Luis came to his feet, went over and opened the rear door. Rex and Harry also stood, Rex blinking.

The girl—well, woman—who emerged was possibly the most handsome he had ever seen save the current sex-symbols on Tri-Di television. And he wouldn't have laid any bets that she might not have won hands down over most of them, given a beauty contest.

He stood there rooted and she came forward, a slightly wry expression on her face. She held out a gloved hand, man fashion, to be shaken and said, "Please excuse this cavalier manner of contacting you, Mr. Bader."

She was slightly tall as his tastes in women went, slightly dark of complexion as though, possibly, of French or Spanish descent. Her hair was so jet black as to be suspect but she used cosmetics, if at all, in unfashionable minimum. Her simple dress was obviously an original and undoubtedly from one of the ultra-swank shops of Rome, Copenhagen or perhaps Budapest. Her jewelry consisted solely of a somewhat elaborate Egyptian necklace such as once graced the neck of Nefertiti of the Eighteenth Dynasty. It came to Rex Bader that it was probably an original, too.

Rex took a breath and said, "You mean Luis and Harry? They've been most charming."

The limousine flowed off.

The newcomer looked at Harry and Luis and Harry said, "Yes, Miss Anastasis," and the two moved away, down to the next bench where they were out of earshot but still very much in evidence.

Rex Bader had taken the expensively gloved hand for the proffered shake and still had it.

She said, "My name is Sophia Anastasis."

"You evidently know mine," he said, releasing the hand reluctantly.

"Please sit down, Mr. Bader."

They sat and she spent a full minute looking him over. "You don't look exactly like the cloak-and-dagger type," she said. "Not sinister enough."

"One of my strong points as an

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investigator," he said. "I suck them in with my air of boyish charm." It had already come to him that this was a job. A rather queer approach to one, but a job. He could use a job. Particularly from someone who was as obviously loaded as Miss Anastasis.

She evidently came to a decision and said. "I represent International Diversified Industries, Incorporated, Mr. Bader."

"At your service." Rex Bader had vaguely heard of the corporation as one of the top twenty or so. If he had it right, they were especially strong in international resorts, in hotel chains, restaurant chains, nightclub chains. Some of the ultra-resorts, such as Nuevo Las Vegas, practically belonged to them

"Your dossier, Mr. Bader, suggests that you might have some background in economics. Your celebrated father, Professor . . ."

"My *dossier* . . . ?" Rex protested. "Don't tell me that you're another who has the connections proper enough to pry into my dossier."

She didn't even bother to answer, but took a new track. She said, "Mr. Bader, are you acquainted with the history of the growth of the Meritocracy?"

"At least vaguely. I took a few courses in socioeconomics while I was at the university and, of course, I've read all my father's books. It wasn't a subject that really appealed to me, though. I'm not the bookworm type."

She took in his build, appreciatively, and there was a glint of humor in her eyes. "I can see you're not. However, let's sum it up for the record.

"We call our present socioeconomic system Meritocracy but in actuality it's merely a continuation of capitalism once known also as free enterprise." She added dryly, "It lost the freedom some time ago, longer ago than most realize. At any rate, capitalism is a social system in which the means of production, distribution, transportation, communication and so forth are largely privately owned. The profits realized go to the owners. Or at least they once did. In order to keep the society going, even in the early days, it was necessary to kick back a considerable amount of the profits in the form of taxes to support the state, maintain police and courts, fight wars and so forth. As the years went by the taxes grew, especially after NIT was established."

"Miss Anastasis, we don't have to be *this* basic."

She ignored him. "In the old days, the entrepreneur capitalists controlled the country. They largely owned it and hence were in a position to pull the strings. They played lip service to democracy and the two-party system but in actuality since it was they who controlled

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both political parties it made little difference whom the electorate chose. In fact, often these old families of the highest levels would take office themselves. Examples go as far back as Taft, but more recently such millionaires and multimillionaires as the Roosevelts, the Kennedys, Lehman, Mellon, Harriman, Rockefeller took high political office.

"However, that was in the old days. With the coming of the Industrial State, as Galbraith called it, the Postindustrial Society as Kahn called it, there came a change. The corporation grew to a point where the individual capitalist could no longer either afford to own it all, nor to operate it. Such corporations as Ford, for instance, grew too large to leave arbitrary decisions in the hands of single men such as old Henry. The managerial revolution was taking over, the Meritocracy was manifesting itself. No single man, no matter how much the genius, could possibly assimilate all the factors necessary to make decisions. Decision making was turned over to highly competent teams of Meritcrats."

"O.K.," Rex said, just to be saying something.

"Nor was ownership in the hands of individuals anymore. Take the Rockefeller family, for instance, with an income by the middle of the Twentieth Century of three times that of the Gross National Product of Mexico. As far back as 1929, however, the Rockefellers owned less than fifteen percent of Standard Oil of Indiana, which was discovered when they tried to oust Colonel Robert W. Stewart, the Chairman of the Board, at the time of the Teapot Dome scandal.

"No, even by then, ownership of Standard Oil was an international thing and thousands, tens of thousands, sometimes hundreds of thousands of persons owned stock in the major corporations. So far as running the corporation was concerned, this had fallen into the hands of the Meritocracy."

Rex Bader looked over at where Luis and Harry were sitting, seemingly idly, seemingly watching the antics of a squirrel. He looked back at her.

"Look, Miss Anastasis, all this is pretty basic, even for me."

She nodded agreement to that. "All right," she said. "It's true that the cosmocorps is taking over in this world of ours and is administered by the Meritocracy. Supposedly, they operate the corporations for the benefit of the stockholders but in actuality they have their own irons in the fire, their own motivations. It is not the wealthy who hold the greatest prestige in the largest nations today, it is the high-ranking members of the Meritocracy. Elections? Once a multimillionaire could dominate the politics of his state, and a group, the politics of the nation. No longer. A dollar a vote, that is, an *earned*

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dollar a vote, is the present system. A man who earns fifty thousand pseudo-dollars a year has fifty thousand votes, but one who realizes a hundred million a year in dividends, rents, or whatever, hasn't even a single vote under the Meritocracy."

"I understand there are a few ways of getting around that," Rex said.

"Not as easy as some think," she said. "At any rate, prestige and control are no longer in the hands of the supposed owner of the means of production. They're in the hands of the Meritocracy."

"I get the feeling that we're building up to a point."

"Yes. And the point is this. Not all of us of the old families have stood still for these developments. Howard Hughes was an early example. One of the largest entrepreneurs of all, he held on to control of his interests to the bitter end. He had his teams, his experts, his scientists and technicians, but *he* made the decisions. The Fords are another example. The son and grandsons of old Henry became members of the Meritocracy themselves and took over high managerial posts."

"Us?" Rex said politely.

"Yes, Mr. Bader. International Diversified Industries is still completely in the hands of some of the old families and we have no interest in seeing the Meritocracy take over."

"O.K.," Rex said, intrigued. "Now I can see we're really getting to the point. The point being, what do you want with me?"

She nodded. "The cosmocorps, largely headed by the Meritocracy, are interested in spreading their strength still further. They dream of a world-wide control, even encompassing the Soviet Complex."

He looked at her warily.

She said, "We are still considering the ramifications, but our first inclination is to believe that this would not be to the interests of we of the . . . old families."

"I see. And . . . ?"

She took a deep breath. "You have been given an assignment to act as a liaison man between Meritcrats here in the United States and what amounts to their equivalent in the Soviet Complex. Mr. Bader, we are willing to pay handsomely if you will report to us, as well as to your present employers."

He looked at her for a long moment and said finally, "There's just one wheel that's off the vehicle, Miss Anastasis. You see, I turned down the job."

She glared at him. "I don't believe you."

He stood up. "Sorry, but that's the way the Yo-Yo spins."

Obviously irritated, her mouth tightened. She was carrying a small purse. She opened it abruptly, brought forth an expensive looking TV phone, activated it and snapped, simply, "Peter!"

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She stood and stalked over to the curb. Rex Bader stared after her. Her figure was as trim as trim.

The limousine flowed up to the curb, only seconds after she had summoned it. She didn't wait for the driver to open the door for her. She wrenched it open and scooted inside. She stared straight ahead. So far as she was concerned, Rex Bader was dead.

He stood looking after her as the electro-steamer took off.

A voice behind him said, "Rex, you made some kind of mistake."

He turned and a brutal blow caught him in the stomach.

Someone had him by an arm and was helping him to his feet. He felt nauseated and ached in a score of places.

A voice said, "We seem to have come along just in time."

A different voice said, "They were beginning to give you the boot. Nasty boys."

Rex groaned, "Look, could you help me over to my apartment?"

"Sure. Here, Tag, take his other arm."

He staggered along between them, feeling slightly better minute by minute. They got him out of the park, across the street and into the apartment house. Still supporting him on both sides, they took him down to the eighth level and eventually to his apartment.

They let him slump into his comfort chair and one stood staring down at him, while the other went over to the autobar.

"You want a doctor?" the one standing above him asked.

"I . . . I don't think so. Wait'll I get my breath."

The one who had gone to the bar came back with a heavy shot glass and handed it to him. "Straight rum," he said.

Rex bolted it.

He looked up at them. They were a fairly average looking pair, about Rex Bader's own age; however, both projected an alert quality and somehow or other you didn't get the impression that they were office workers.

The one who had handed him the rum said, "I'm Tag Dermott and this is John Mickoff."

Rex sucked in air deeply, which made his lungs ache, and said, "Rex Bader. I want to thank you men." He sucked in more air, then said, "How did you know I lived down here on the eighth level? You made a beeline for my apartment before I told you where it was."

They looked down at him questioningly but for the moment said nothing.

Rex said, "It comes to me that your showing up there in the park wasn't exactly by chance."

"No, it wasn't," Dermott said. "Those are tough customers, Bader. Why did they work you over?"

"Damned if I know. Evidently,

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because their boss didn't get what she wanted from me."

"What did she want?"

"Who are you?"

The one named John Mickoff said impatiently, "Obviously, we'll get to that. What did she want?"

"She thought I had taken a job and wanted to make it a double job. When I told her I had refused the assignment, she didn't believe me."

"I don't blame her," Mickoff said, sitting down on the couch across from Rex. Dermott joined him. Of the two, Mickoff seemed the easier going, there was a vague surly quality about Dermott.

Mickoff added, "Sophia Anastasis usually gets what she wants."

"You know her?" Rex said, surprised.

"I know of her."

"What do you mean, you don't blame her?"

"I think you took the job, too."

Rex could only stare at him. "What do you mean by that?"

John Mickoff held out his hand. "Could I see your pocket phone?"

Scowling puzzlement, Rex fumbled in his jacket, came forth with his pocket-phone-credit-card, and, not knowing why he should, handed it over.

Mickoff put it onto the TV phone screen at the side of Rex's chair and said, "Credit account balance check, please."

Within moments a robot voice said, "Five thousand, two hundred and sixteen pseudo-dollars and fourteen cents."

John Mickoff said dryly, even as he handed the pocket phone back, "Quite a neat little balance for someone who usually collects NIT."

Rex Bader, feeling better now, was dumbfounded. "But . . . I . . . my account is only a little over two hundred dollars!"

Tag Dermott said, "It was until someone switched five thousand to it. Frankly, it looks like a retainer to us, Bader, and I suppose it did to Sophia Anastasis."

"Well, it wasn't." Rex rubbed a sore spot on one hip and groaned. "Some girl," he said.

"Girl isn't exactly the term," John Mickoff said. "According to her dossier in the National Data Banks, Sophia Anastasis will never see forty again. In this day of permanent cosmetological arts, anyone as well situated as Sophia Anastasis can remain looking like a twenty-five year old until she keels over."

"Some woman, then," Rex said bitterly. "And she said she came from one of the old families."

"Old families!" Dermott blurted. He began to laugh sourly.

Rex looked at him. "What's so funny?"

John Mickoff chuckled, too. "Did you think she meant such as the Astors, the Carnegies, the Rothschilds?"

Rex frowned at him.

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"Old families, old families," Mickoff said. "You're a private eye . . ."

Rex winced at the term.

". . . Aren't you acquainted with International Diversified Industries?"

"I've heard of them. Big outfit."

"Big outfit is right. However, they don't spend money on publicizing themselves, in fact, the other way around. They spend millions each year in keeping the nature of their corporation under wraps."

Tag Dermott took over. "Bader, the Mafia, the Cosa Nostra families, or the Syndicate, if you will, had its beginnings in the United States back before the First World War. However, they didn't really get going until Prohibition. By the time that experiment proved a fizzle, they were pretty well in the saddle in not only beer and booze but a dozen other rackets as well, including gambling, women, dope, labor racketeering. The boys at that time were heavies, such as Al Capone, and had a very poor public image indeed. The smarter ones realized it and began to shape up a bit. Lucky Luciano managed to look downright gentlemanly there toward the end. But times were changing. The second generation of our slobbish hoods were sent to college and got themselves educations. Meanwhile, the Cosa Nostra families were branching out into more legitimate fields where they weren't so vulnerable to law forces. They folded their prostitution projects, except in areas where it was legal, or at least winked at by the authorities. They established their gambling interests in states such as Nevada, where no laws were broken. Their breweries became licensed and their distilleries became stock concerns, listed on the New York Exchange. They also took a deep interest in resorts, in night clubs, in fancy restaurants, in sports and entertainment.

"All right. That was the second generation. By the time the third came along, they were well entrenched, and never, never resorted to anything illegal. Of course, they hired the best legal brains of the country to advise them on just how near the edge of the law it was possible to skate. By this time, they had eliminated the remnants of the crude elements of the old Mafia, and the Cosa Nostra families became eminently respectable. They also had at hand, for syndicate operations, an unbelievable fund of capital."

John Mickoff said, "For example, Bader, do you know who owns the Bahama Islands?"

"Bahama Islands?"

"Hm-m-m. In the old days there used to be so-called sin cities; places like Tangier, Panama City, Singapore. But in the past they never had a sin country. The Bahamas were a sitting duck. Inter-

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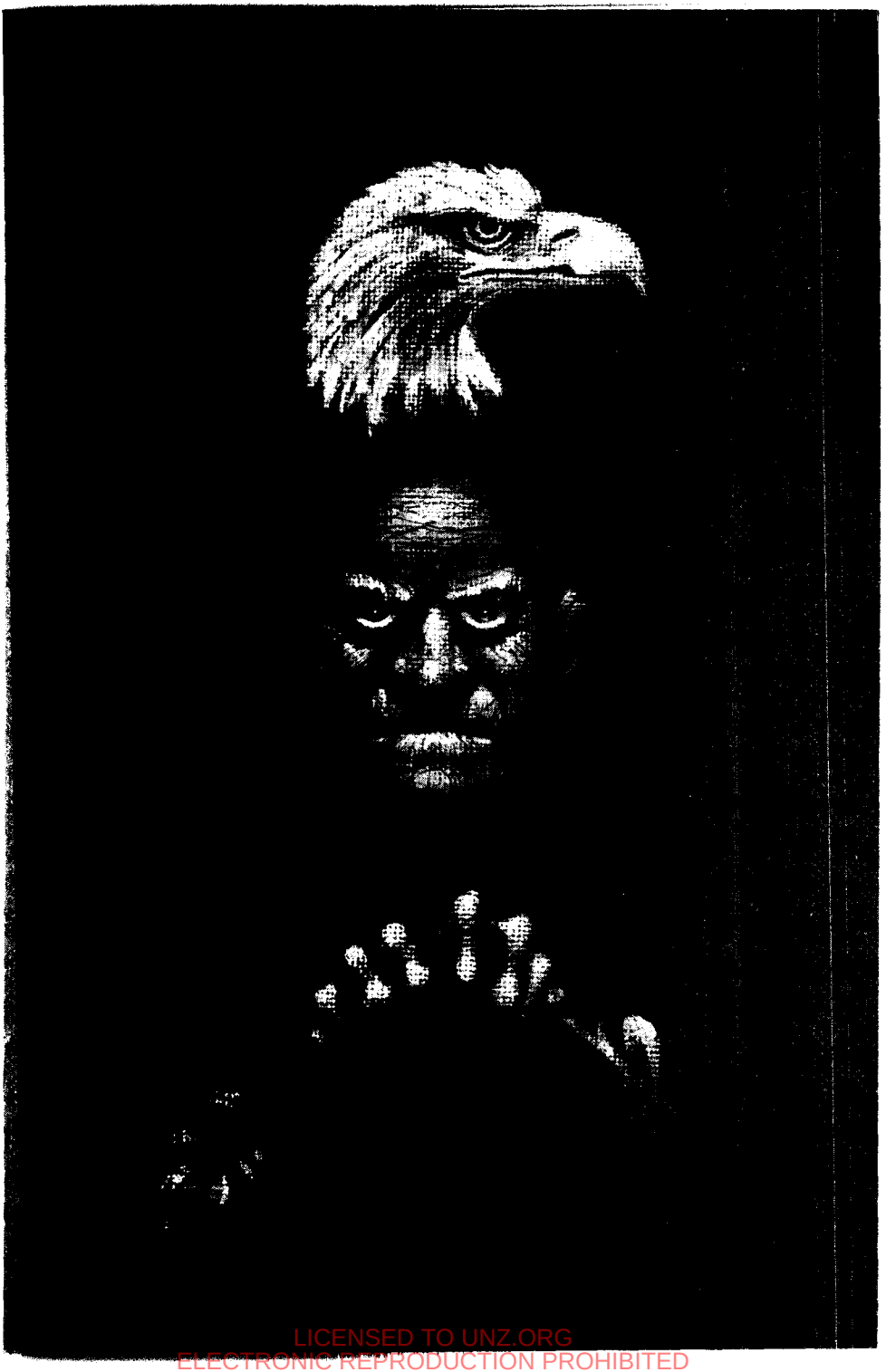

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national Diversified Industries, Incorporated moved in and literally bought the Bahamas. They purchased at least ninety percent of all property, all land, all industry, including hotels, resorts, restaurants—everything. And in so doing, of course, bought the government as well. Offhand, I can't think of anything that is illegal in the Bahamas today, if you have the price. Prostitution is legal, most narcotics are legal including marihuana, homosexuality is legal and Bahama law doesn't even include that proviso in British law about consulting adults. Every known form of gambling is legal. Where night clubs leave off and ultra-bordellos begin is moot. A pervert, given money, can find any sin he can dream up. Oh, the Bahamas are the thing these days."

Dermott came in again. "And they aren't alone. For the sake of those who don't want to travel quite that far, or don't like the climate, or whatever, there is always the island of Malta in the Mediterranean. It also was purchased, lock, stock and hogshead, by our International Diversified Industries and duplicates the openness of the Bahamas. I heard the other day that our friends are about to expand the same operation to the island of Macao, right across from Hong Kong."

Rex Bader hissed a whistle through his teeth. "Can't anything be done about them?"

"What?" Mickoff demanded. "They're legal. In this country, they wouldn't dream of breaking laws. All their operations are legitimate. In whatever countries they operate, they abide by the rules. In the Bahamas and Malta, they still abide by the laws but in those cases they make them themselves. What you've got to realize, Bader, is that when crime becomes big enough, it's no longer crime. The former criminals are in a position to buy legality."

"No wonder Miss Anastasis isn't interested in seeing an international world government," Rex said bitterly.

The eyebrows of the two across from him went up.

Rex said, "I shouldn't have said that. I didn't take the job, but it comes under the head of betraying a trust."

"Not exactly, Bader," Mickoff said.

"I didn't mean Miss Anastasis's trust."

"We know what you meant, Bader."

Rex looked at the two of them. "O.K. Let's get to *our* business. You seem to know an awful lot of mine."

As though rehearsed, the two stood simultaneously.

John Mickoff said, "We came to request that you appear tomorrow at ten o'clock in the Octagon offices of John Coolidge."

"John Coolidge!"

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Dermott nodded. "That's right. Director of the Inter-American Bureau of Investigation."

III

Rex Bader slept fitfully that night.

Dermott and Mickoff had told him no more. He was requested to turn up at the offices of the legendary John Coolidge in the Octagon labyrinth on the morrow. O.K. But why? He had been assaulted by the descendants of the Mafia, an organization he had read about but in which he had never been quite able to believe; it was a bit far out to be believable. He had been offered a fantastic job by one who was obviously high, high in the ranks of America's Meritcrats. Why him? Somebody, probably Westley, had deposited five thousand pseudo-dollars to his account. Once again, why? Five thousand pseudo-dollars could be a year's income for such as Rex Bader.

Toward six o'clock and dawn, he was in a half sleep, half awakening state. He had taken on two or three drinks too many the night before, following the leaving of Dermott and Mickoff, in the hope that they would help blank out the punches and kicks he had taken from Harry and Luis.

And in the half sleep an idea had come to him. Popular understanding to the contrary, it was not Rex Bader's belief that you ever had original, creative ideas in sleep. In dream, you might *think* that new conceptions were coming through but in the snowy awakening at dawn they invariably turned out to be poor shakes. However, in the half sleep, the drowsy, sluggish, in-between when you're trying to decide whether to come fully awake and enter into the new day's challenges, or retreat back into the ultimate escape from reality, sleep, it was possible to get an intuitive something to come through.

He sat up abruptly and glared down at the foot of the couch-bed.

He got up, attired in only the pajama tops that were his invariable nightwear and running his tongue over his teeth in an unhappy attempt to clear away the muck residue of the drinks of the night before, made his way over to his TV library booster.

He scratched himself and yawned as he dialed statistics. He thought about it and dialed again, narrowing it down. He got the one hundred largest corporations in the world, narrowed it down to ranking officials in these corporations, narrowed it down to photographs and summary biographies of such ranking officials.

And found Westley.

His name wasn't just Westley.

His name was Francis Westley Roget and he was Chairman of the Board of International Communications, Inc. Incorporated in Switzerland, basically. Incorporated ev-

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erywhere else that made any difference, as well, including here in the United States.

Rex Bader allowed himself to close his eyes in a brief spasm of pain at having turned down a job proffered by the chairman of the board of the largest single corporation the world had ever seen, or was apt to see. Five thousand pseudo-dollars for a few hours of the time of a poverty level so-called private investigator? It probably didn't even come under the head of petty cash.

But Temple Norman had been right. Francis W. Roget wasn't one of the richest men in the world. He might be one of the most powerful and influential men in the world, but he was a hired hand working for a salary.

With the coming of the communications satellites and the developments of microelectronics to the point where a pocket TV phone for every citizen became a practicality, ICI, International Communications, passed even Amalgamated Autos, in gross annual income. For these days, for all practical purposes, *everybody* could be in instant communication with *everybody* in the world. At least, such was true in the advanced post industrial societies of the West and the Soviet Complex. In the more backward areas of Africa, Asia and South America only the more educated classes carried pocket phones. For that matter, it was a misdemeanor in the United States not to have your pocket phone on your person; through it, the Federal government was in instant touch with every citizen either individually or collectively.

Just for the dutch of it, Rex Bader went back to his screen and checked out the other ranking Meritcrat of ICI. And, yes, there he was, down the list considerably but ranking as a vice president and special assistant to the chairman of the board. Temple Norman.

Norman. Norman. Rex Bader thought about it. He dialed the library banks, dialed Gustavus Myers, dialed "The History of the Great American Fortunes" in its latest revised edition. The Norman family went way back, it turned out. Back to the days of the so-called robber barons of American business development. They had been strong in both railroads and telegraphic communications. Well, railroads were out now with the coming of the laser cut underground ultra-highways, now automated. However, the Norman family was evidently still strong in communications. And, yes, here was mention of Temple Norman, a grandson several times removed of the original Jules Norman who had started the fortune back in the Civil War period.

Well, so much for Francis W. Roget and so much for Temple Norman. And so much for idle curiosity.

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Rex Bader went into his bath, applied depilatory shaving cream and wiped his beard away with a face towel which he then tossed into the disposal chute. As he did so, he considered all over again the advisability of having his facial hair permanently removed. But no, there was something psychological about having a beard. A man had a beard. So it was a pain in the neck to remove it each morning, but who could tell? Perhaps full beards would come in again some day. If so, you'd be sunk. A laughingstock. A weird.

He activated the pre-set shower and went through his standard warmish to hot spray, and then slowly back to cold and then bitter cold. The drier automatically came on and in moments he returned to his living cum bedroom to dress.

He looked at his suit glumly. He had only worn it one week but what the hell, he had five thousand pseudo-dollars that he hadn't figured upon. He took the suit along with shirt and underwear into the bathroom and threw all into the disposal and then returned to his order box and dialed another outfit from the ultra-market down in the bowels of the building.

He finished dressing, went into his dining nook, sat down at the table and dialed his standard breakfast, grapefruit juice, soft boiled egg, coffee and toast from the auto-restaurant, also located several floors beneath him.

As he ate, he wondered what it was about breakfast that you could eat the identical thing every morning in the year and never tire of it. If you'd had to eat, say, whale stew every lunch for even three or four days running, you would have been up in arms. He wasn't hungry enough to eat the plate and utenslis, nor the napkin, so he threw them into the disposal.

He dialed the time and decided he had better be on his way. Greater Washington was some five hundred kilometers in distance. It would take him the better part of an hour to get to the Octagon and to his appointment with John Coolidge. He had been aware of the bureaucrat as far back as he could remember. Even when Rex Bader was a lad, Coolidge had been director of the IABI, the Inter-American Bureau of Investigation, that amalgamation of all the police and intelligence organizations in the United States.

The transport station of his building was two floors beneath the one on which he maintained his mini-apartment. He took the elevator down and strolled along the corridors to the metro entry. He took the first mini-bus to the city's central terminal and switched there to a twenty seater express to the terminal in Greater Washington. The automated bus took them at a good five or six hundred kilometer clip to their destination. The things were getting faster every year that

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went by. They were going to have to upgrade the acceleration chairs, Rex decided, either that or smooth off the attaining of full speed and of deceleration.

At the Greater Washington Terminal, he found it was possible to get a mini-bus to the Octagon.

He had hardly got seated in it when his pocket phone buzzed. He brought it out and activated it and a robot voice said, "Your destination, please?"

Rex said, "I have an appointment with John Coolidge, Director of the IABI."

"One moment, please." And then, "Confirmed."

Rex Bader shrugged and relaxed. So much for Octagon security. They hadn't even had to ask his name or identity number. When he'd put his pocket phone in the mini-bus's payment slot they had automatically checked it.

The mini-bus stopped at the Octagon's terminal and he got out and looked about. There was a row of reception desks immediately before him.

He went over to one and said into the screen, "Rex Bader. Appointment with John Coolidge of the IABI at ten o'clock."

The screen said, "One moment, please."

Rex Bader stood there. In a couple of minutes a small, two-place floater came up and its screen said, "Mr. Bader, please."

He sat on the seat and let it take him where it would. He had never been in the Octagon before but had seen it portrayed so many times on Tri-Di shows that he felt at home.

The IABI offices were only a few kilometers away from the transport terminal at which he had arrived. The floater took him right on through the acres of outer offices into an elevator and up several stories. It eventually came to a halt at a door which almost immediately slid open. The office beyond contained a single desk.

Tag Dermott looked up, grunted welcome and said, "Hi, Bader. You're exactly on time." He stood and came over to shake hands.

The floater turned and took off.

Rex Bader said, "O.K. What's it all about?"

Tag Dermott said, "The Chief's expecting you. Come on." He turned and led the way to another door at the far end of the reception room and stood before the identity screen.

He said, "Bader and Dermott," and the door opened immediately.

The large office beyond had a Spartan quality; however, Rex Bader was quite at home. He had seen it at least a score of times. John Coolidge took many an occasion to speak to the citizens of the United States on his own equivalent of a fireside chat. Usually, Rex thought sourly, on the threat of subversion emanating from the

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Soviet Complex or China. For the better part of a century they had been beating that drum. It was Rex Bader's personal belief that the Soviet Complex was just about as interested in subverting the West as the West was in subverting the Soviet Complex, and except for a few crackpots that was about nil.

In spite of the fact that Rex Bader had been aware of the famous IABI head for almost thirty years, it came as a mild surprise to him that the police director was so elderly. Evidently, make-up protected him, on Tri-Di, a full fifteen or twenty years younger than he truly was. He must be, Rex realized, pushing seventy-five.

He sat behind a huge desk, which was barren of ought save a battery of TV phone screens. He was heavyset and square of face with a wide, stiff mouth, reminiscent, in a way, of George Washington. And he so obviously expected to dominate any gathering at which he was present.

There were three others seated about the room. Two were probably in their sixties, the other a younger man who at first gave an impression of being ever at ease but then an uncomfortable feeling of wolfishness.

Tag Dermott said, "Mr. Rex Bader, sir."

Coolidge nodded. He said, "Mr. Bader. Senator Hooker, Admiral Westover." He made no effort to introduce the younger man.

Bader said, "Gentlemen," and nodded to each in turn. It was their top, they could start spinning it whenever they wanted.

Senator Hooker was vaguely familiar to Rex as an old pro politician. Bluff, outspoken, with a reputation for being able to stick his foot in his mouth but also retain the ability to extricate it in time to avoid disaster. The senator was an ultra-conservative, the first to protest loudly and long given some such measure as increasing the amount of Negative Income Tax, or on the other hand increase corporation or income taxes to pay for such charity. He and John Coolidge also played footsie in their endless warnings of subversion from abroad.

The admiral, Rex had never heard of but though he was now attired in mufti, seadog he obviously remained. There was a sun squint in his eyes as he stared Rex up and down. Long years on a bridge? He might have been in his early sixties, but his physical trim was as good as Rex's own.

Coolidge said, "That will be all for the moment, Dermott. Mr. Bader, please be seated. Many years ago, I once spent an evening with your father, the professor."

"Oh?" Rex said. He took the indicated chair. Tag Dermott left the room.

Coolidge nodded, his face still expressionless. "It was a banquet

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given by a think tank, as they called them in those days. They had just finished an assignment under the then president. The dinner was in way of celebration. I was the speaker of the evening."

Rex wondered what he was getting at.

John Coolidge said, "I remember during our cigars and port, your father making the following remark. He said, 'When it comes to politics, I list to larboard, especially after a bit of port.' "

Rex looked at the IABI chief. Good grief, imagine remembering a thing like that all these years.

Coolidge said, "Are you a Leftist, Mr. Bader?"

Rex gave a snort. "No, and neither was my father really. I'm afraid he couldn't resist coming up with a *bon mot.*"

The four of them continued to look at him appraisingly.

Rex cleared his throat and said, "I've always thought the term a bit on the meaningless side. If memory serves me, it comes from the fact that during the French Revolution in the National Assembly the radicals sat to the left of the presiding officer, the more conservative to the right. When Lenin's Bolsheviks came along, they inherited the label and supposedly were as far to the left, so-called, as you could get. Mild liberals were supposedly a bit left, socialists of the watered-down Debs and Norman Thomas type were a big further left, radical socialists of the DeLeonist type were further left, and so on and so forth. Later on when the Soviets began to play it cool it was decided that Mao's communists were further left than the Russians and that Castro's Cubans were still further left. Here in the States, supposedly the Democrats were more leftist than the Republicans and that got sillier still since the Southern Democrats were, if anything, more conservative than the Republicans. And you supposedly had liberal Republicans who were considered the left wing of the party. And who was prominent among them? Nelson Rockefeller, the pride of possibly the single wealthiest family in the country."

Rex wound it up. "The term doesn't make much sense."

The younger man, the dangerously tough looking one Coolidge hadn't introduced gave a gruff chuckle, but Senator Hooker puffed out his cheeks.

"What *are* your politics, Bader?" he demanded.

Rex looked at him. "I don't have any."

The senator, a slight edge of impatience manifest, said, "Surely you vote?"

"No, I don't. I'm not at all political. I came to the conclusion years ago that there hadn't been an unrigged election for more than half a century."

"Rigged election!" Coolidge

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snapped "Are you insane? In the United States?"

Rex shook his head. He hadn't the vaguest idea of what they wanted of him or why the conversation had taken this bent, but, once again, it was their top and they were spinning it as they wished.

He made a negative gesture with his right hand. "I don't mean that a vote is miscounted, or that the vote is rigged in any of the other various methods used in the old days." He took his pocket phone, identity card from his pocket and looked down at it. "That, possibly, was one of the plus factors in issuing these things. This is not only a TV phone, but my credit card. It's my identity number, it's my access to the National Data Banks. It's also my voting booth. I didn't even have to register when I came of age. The computers automatically registered me. When an election comes along, I can vote through it and my vote is computed along with everyone else's. And nobody plays hanky-panky. The vote is honest. One vote per one earned dollar."

"Then what in the devil are you talking about, young man," the admiral said.

Rex looked at him. "The rigging takes place before it ever comes to the vote. The powers that be, in both the Meritocracy and the Bureaucracy, decide who the candidates are to be, and those candidates come from their own ranks. Precious little difference it makes which one I vote for, they all stand for the same thing. Suppose, for instance, I wanted to vote for myself as President of the United States. How would I go about it?"

Coolidge said, "You'd take measures to have yourself nominated by one or the other of the parties."

"Hm-m-m. And what chance would I have of that, given our present one earned dollar, one vote setup? I'm usually on NIT. Even when I earn enough so that I'm not, I have precious few votes, compared to, say, yourself."

Coolidge grunted. He said, "All this is not very germane, at any rate." He looked down into one of his TV phone screens. "In spite of your present financial position, it would seem that you are both ambitious and aggressive in your attempts to better your position."

So, Rex thought, someone else delving into his National Data Bank dossier. Well, at least Coolidge, in his position, was legally entitled to do so. However, he said nothing, just continued to look at the other.

Coolidge said, "Bader, on the surface perhaps the government and the politico-economic system of the United States would seem to be most stable. However, there are movements taking place that, shall we say, threaten all that has been accomplished in the way of prog-

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ress in the last few decades. I assume that, as the son of your father, you are familiar with the term class struggle?"

"You mean in the Marx and Engels sense?"

"*If you will. In past socioeconomic systems* the conflict was between slave and slaveowner, later, serf and feudalistic lord, later feudalistic lord against the newly emerging middle class. Under classic capitalism, the so-called class struggle was between capitalist and proletarian. But, Bader, under the Meritocracy something new has been added."

Rex Bader waited for him to go on. He simply wasn't getting this. He still hadn't the vaguest idea of why he was here, what they wanted of him.

Coolidge said, "In the post-industrial world, Bader, the so-called proletariat, in the old sense of the word, has largely disappeared. Automation—ultra-mation, as some are now calling it—has almost eliminated the blue-collar worker of yesteryear. As far back as shortly after the Hitler War, the white-collar worker overtook and passed the blue-collar worker in numbers. The primary occupations, agriculture, mining, fishing, hunting, forestry, and even the secondary occupations, those concerned with processing the products of the primary ones, were all but automated out of existence. Such jobs as remain in these fields are no longer held by grimy handed proletarians but by scientists, engineers, technicians, by members, in short, of the Meritocracy; well paid, secure, intelligent, dependable.

"The class struggle between working class and owning class? Bader, there hasn't been a strike in one of the first hundred largest corporations in this country in twenty years, nor is there apt to be one in the next twenty.

"The tertiary and more recently the quaternary occupations now predominate, the first encompassing those occupations that render services to the primary and secondary occupations, and the second occupations that render services to tertiary occupations or to one another. This last occupational group now dominates, Bader; occupations largely concentrated in government, the professions, education, the nonprofit private groups."

"O.K.," Rex said agreeably. "So the class struggle is no longer with us."

"I didn't say that," Coolidge said evenly.

Rex looked at him.

Coolidge said, "It is just that we have a new line up of classes. New issues. With the majority of what was once the proletariat technologically displaced by progress in this computer world of ours and receiving Negative Income Tax, the conflict is no longer for shorter working hours, higher pay, fringe

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benefits and such. In fact, about all that the average citizen struggles for today—and it's not really a struggle, it's more of a whine—is a higher SNI." The police head allowed himself a curl of lip.

Rex looked at the admiral, the senator and the competent looking stranger who had not been introduced. However, they were allowing John Coolidge to carry the ball and hold their peace. Rex looked back to the FABI director.

Coolidge said, "In actuality, there are three elements—call them classes if you will—in basic conflict today. Possibly its nature is largely hidden, as below the surface, but it is there. Bader, it is there. And is a threat to our way of life."

They seemed to be getting nearer and nearer to the point, but Rex Bader still didn't know what it might be.

Coolidge enumerated on his fingers. "We have the Meritcrats, what was once called the Managerial Class, which is admittedly indispensable to our socioeconomic system. We also have the owning class which, although it largely possesses the stock of our mature corporations, our cosmocorps, no longer directly controls them. Third, we have the government employee such as myself, such as these other gentlemen here. Bader, who would you say was the single largest employer in the world?"

Rex shrugged. "Why, I suppose Intercontinental Communications. If not, one of the other of the largest cosmocorps."

Coolidge was shaking his head. "No. The largest single employer in the world is either the government of the United States, or the government of the Soviet Complex. I actually don't know which. The big trend in government employment probably began in the administration of Roosevelt. It boomed during the Second War, failed to fall off following it. Within twenty years after the Hitler War, Federal, State and City employment, not even counting military or teachers, was at the ten million mark. With the amalgamation of practically all charity, pensions, Social Security, Unemployment Insurance and all the rest into Federal hands and the coming of the Guaranteed Annual Wage, the Negative Income Tax, the number has increased."

Well, Rex Bader knew that.

Coolidge said, "Our system works, Bader. Never have so many had so much. Never has there been the degree of security we enjoy today. To an extent, perhaps, the Meritocracy and the Federal government blend, personnel overlaps. For that matter, to a certain degree so does our other important class, the stockholders of our mature corporations. Many of these, as individuals, work either with the Meritocracy or the government. But, beneath it all, Bader, there is a conflict. And that is why you are here."

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That had come out of the blue. Rex Bader blinked.

"How do you mean?"

"Certain elements among the Meritocracy can see little use for the stockholder. They contend he no longer serves a purpose."

"Damn subversives," the senator muttered.

"Other elements see the present form of government as antiquated and want the Meritcrats to take over to a larger degree even such fields as education, the post office, the management of the automated ultra-highways."

"I see," Rex said.

Coolidge leaned forward, his eyes full on those of the younger man. "You have been employed, Bader, by a group of these extremists to go to the Soviet Complex and check with their equal numbers there. Very well. They are fated to failure. This great nation of ours will continue, it will refuse to be swallowed up in some Utopian world order. However, it is our duty to keep close check on Francis Roget and his ilk. They wish to disturb the delicate balance of our society. It is our patriotic duty to forestall them."

"Hear, hear," Senator Hooker came up with.

The admiral nodded his approval.

Rex muttered, "Oh *no*, not again."

"I beg your pardon?" Coolidge said.

Rex Bader said, "Look. We won't have to stretch this out. If I understand you, you want me to report to you on any contacts I make in the Soviet Complex."

"Of course. It is your patriotic duty. You will, of course, be amply reimbursed. It is a wonderful opportunity, my boy."

Rex was shaking his head. "That's it, I'm not your boy. Nobody seems to believe me, but, you see, I didn't take the job and I'm not about to."

All eyes were on him.

The stranger gruffed a chuckle.

"What do you mean?" the senator asked, coldly.

"Just that. I was offered the job. I turned it down. I don't even speak Russian. I'd be a sitting duck if I went into that area on what amounts to an espionage expedition."

John Coolidge stared down into his TV screen, emptily. "See here, Bader. According to the computers of the National Bank, five thousand pseudo-dollars were transferred from the emergency fund of Francis W. Roget, Chairman of the Board of Intercontinental Communications, to your account. Why?"

Rex cleared his throat. "Possibly to impress me. To show a poor man just how advantageous it would be to stick his neck out for dear old ICI. O.K. I was impressed. If they want to impress me five thousand pseudo-dollars worth, O.K. I have a sense of integrity which I keep

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within reasonable bounds. So, I'll keep it and remain impressed, but I'm still not going to take a suicide assignment into the Soviet Complex."

The stranger who all this time had remained unintroduced and silent said softly, "It would not be a suicide assignment, Mr. Bader."

Rex looked at him. "Who are you to say? It's my neck and it sounds like suicide to me."

John Coolidge said evenly, "Bader, let me introduce you to Colonel Ilya Simonov, Greater Washington head of the *Chrezvychainaya Komissiya*."

If the other had been named a visitor from Mars, Rex couldn't have been more surprised.

"*Chrezvychainaya Komissiya!*" he blurted. "Soviet Complex espionage-counter-espionage."

The Soviet colonel said easily, "Originally, the Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage. However, our duties have been somewhat expanded since the early days."

Rex's eyes went from him to the IABI director in disbelief. "But that means he's the head of Soviet espionage in this country."

Coolidge nodded. "That is correct, Bader."

"Well . . . well, why don't you arrest him?"

"Possibly for the same reason that the Soviets do not arrest his equal number in Moscow."

The admiral laughed sourly, the senator seemed mildly embarrassed.

Coolidge said, "Look here, Bader, present day international intelligence is more sophisticated than is generally realized by the layman. Suppose I were to arrest the colonel. Which would, of course, immediately lead to the arrest of our people in Moscow. The Soviets would then send a replacement. It could well take us months, if not years, to locate him. Remember Major Abel, of fame some decades ago? As it is, we keep moderate check on Colonel Simonov, they on our people in the Soviet Complex. Once in a while, if things become too overt, we make an arrest, they make an arrest. Finally, we exchange agents, even-Steven, and start all over again."

Rex Bader rolled his eyes upward slightly.

Coolidge said, "And there are other advantages to the situation. By cooperating we can sometimes profitably exchange information on China or some of the neutrals. Sometimes we can utilize each other's assistance as in this present situation."

Rex Bader looked from Colonel Simonov to John Coolidge and back again.

"What present situation?"

"The elements that the colonel represents in the Soviet Complex are no more interested in an upset

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of the world's delicate balance than the admiral, the senator and I am. It could well be that if Francis Roget and his cosmocorps Meritcrats were successful in their attempts to achieve a world government based upon the international corporations, that such as the colonel would of a sudden find themselves unemployed. What use would there be for international agents with a world government?"

Rex Bader came to his feet slowly. He said, his voice low, "And you might find yourself out of power as well, might you not, Mr. Coolidge? And you, Senator, since who could say what the local government might be like given such an amalgamation of world nations? And you, too, Admiral. What use is a military in a united world?"

He looked at Colonel Ilya Simonov. "If I understand you correctly, you'd let me into the Soviet Complex so that I could contact those elements in your equivalent of the Meritocracy that are unhappy with your present system. Then, of course, I'd betray them to your *Chrezvychainaya Komissiya.*"

"Our government would be properly thankful, Mr. Bader. The Soviet Complex has long since ceased to be a have-not nation."

"I'm sure you're right," Rex said grimly. "However, no thanks. The more I hear about this whole project, from everybody involved, the more it scares me. So, if you gentlemen will forgive me . . ."

He turned abruptly and headed for the door.

Coolidge snapped after him, in obvious anger, "You realize, Bader, that my bureau is not without resources."

Rex grunted and said over his shoulder, "I know, I know, but you can't get plasma from a rutabaga, Mr. Coolidge. About the most you could do to me is have my license lifted. And I'm already on NIT. What have I got to lose?"

He had second thoughts on his way back home. But then third ones. Everybody and their cousin were offering him sizable sums to take on this assignment. Why he had been chosen, he hadn't the slightest idea, but suddenly everybody wanted him on their team. Well, it still looked like suicide to him. He was being asked to betray, not by just one group but by three different ones.

Roget and his affiliates wanted to line up with Soviet Complex Meritcrats, or whatever they might call them over there, with the intention of ultimately bypassing the governments of the United States and the Soviet Complex. Sophia Anastasis wanted him to betray Roget and report all to her so she could possibly take steps to throw a monkey wrench into the works. Coolidge and his people wanted him to cooperate with the Soviets in betraying everybody, period.

He still said, no thanks.

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In irritation, he summoned an individual electro-steamer to take him back to New Princeton, the pseudo-city in which his apartment house was situated. It cost considerably more than the public buses would have but he didn't want to go through the routine of transferring and, besides, he was temporarily rich with his five thousand.

He disembarked from the vehicle in the terminal in his building and instead of making for his mini-apartment, went directly to his favorite autobar-club on the tenth floor level below ground. There were swankier establishments up above, but this was the nearest thing to a hangout he had.

The place was empty at this time of day, or nearly so. There were three or four others, all of them seated before the Tri-Di screen which dominated one end of the club room.

He got as far away from the screen, with its endless violence and noise, as he could and took an unoccupied table. He dialed himself a synthetic Jamaican rum-and-cola and when the frosted glass rose to the table center, from below, took it up glumly.

He wondered how much in the way of credits he would have realized if he had taken up Roget, Sophia Anastasis, Coolidge and Colonel Simonov, each in turn. A fortune, undoubtedly, a fortune which would have lasted him the rest of his life. What was a fortune to him, Rex Bader, was petty cash to any of them. Petty, petty cash. He swore, meaninglessly, at himself.

A stranger slid into the chair immediately next to him.

Rex scowled. The other was an open faced, cheerful looking type of about thirty-five. Dressed approximately like Rex himself, that is, as one who probably existed on his NIT, or, at most, on a lower-level salary. He was blond of hair, blue of eye, Scandinavian in background by the looks of him.

And the hell with him.

Rex said, "The place is practically empty. There are other tables."

The other didn't answer. Instead, he pushed a note over to Rex and then indicated that which he held, surreptitiously, in his right hand beneath the table's level. It was a black, Gyro-jet pistol and it was trained unwaveringly at Rex Bader's stomach.

Rex blinked. He had never before in his life had a gun trained at his belly. He could have gone on another twenty years without the experience and have remained just as happy.

He looked down at the note. It was very clearly printed and read:

DON'T SAY ANYTHING!
HAND ME YOUR
POCKET PHONE.

Rex looked at him.

The other motioned slightly with the gun and his face was cold and empty.

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Rex Bader reached into his pocket and brought forth his pocket phone and pushed it across the table to the stranger.

That worthy picked it up, turned slightly in his chair and tossed it to another newcomer who had taken his place at a table next to them. Rex hadn't noticed the second one until then.

That one scooped the phone up, stuck it into a bulky looking briefcase, got to his feet and headed toward the men's room.

IV

Rex Bader said, "It's illegal to deprive a citizen of his pocket phone."

"It sure is," the other said cheerfully.

He handed the gun over to Rex Bader. It was a child's toy.

Rex said, "What the hell. Hey, what's going on? Where's he gone with my pocket phone?" He started to stand up.

The counterfeit gunman held up a hand to restrain him. "He's just taking it out of earshot. You can have it back any time you want."

Rex glared at him. "I want it back right now, damn it! What do you mean, out of earshot?"

"You're bugged, Bader."

The glare turned into a stare. Rex stood there, half in his chair, half out.

"What in the devil are you talking about?"

"Coolidge has a twenty-four hour a day bug on you. Didn't you know any citizen's pocket phone can be utilized as a bug? Everything you say, from now on in, is monitored. Not necessarily a human on the other end. They have a computer, usually, and rely on key words. Words like crime, subversion, radical, demonstration, gun, fight, underground, revolution, so on and so forth. If they come up, the computer automatically notifies whatever agent is handling your case and the whole conversation is played back. You're monitored, period. Not just what you say over the phone, after you've activated it, but whatever you say and whatever anybody else within twenty feet or so of you says."

As a matter of fact, Rex Bader had vaguely heard that it was possible to so monitor any citizen's speech but he had thought the authorities handled the ability with kid gloves. There had been a great deal of heat with the civil liberties people about it. Supposedly it was utilized only on confirmed criminals.

He sank back into his chair, baffled.

"But why?"

"For turning down his proposal, I suppose. I was proud of you, Bader."

"*You* were proud of me. Who are you? What goes on around here?"

"How about coming on over to my place and I'll fill you in. There

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are some things developing that I doubt if you know about."

"I don't want to know about them. All I want to do is get off of this damn merry-go-round."

The other said cheerfully, "I doubt if you can, Bader. It's moving too fast."

Rex Bader was glaring again. "Just who are you?"

"Call me Dave, if you want." He stood. "Coming?" Without waiting for an answer, he strolled toward the door.

For a brief moment, Rex Bader was going to let him go. But no, devil take it, he had to find out what the other was all about. He stood, too, and growling bitterly under his breath, followed.

Out in the corridor the self-named Dave led the way to the building's terminal and summoned a two-seater. They got into it and Dave dialed, putting his pocket plastic identity card in the payment screen.

Rex reached out suddenly and snatched it. The other didn't put up much in the way of resistance, merely shrugged. Rex looked at it. The name was David Zimmerman.

Zimmerman said mildly, "I told you my name was Dave."

"Where's my phone?" Rex said, handing it back.

"Jim's following with it," Dave Zimmerman said, still mildly. "You can have it whenever you wish. But as I say, it's bugged."

"How do you know yours isn't?"

"I know," the other said simply.

"Well, at least you're different. No chauffeur-driven limousine."

"How's that?"

"Nothing." Rex Bader lapsed into sour silence.

The ride took them approximately fifteen minutes and they eventually emerged in a high-rise apartment house very similar to Rex Bader's own. He made a point of noting the name of the building and the address. Zimmerman didn't seem to mind.

They took an elevator to the twentieth floor, emerged and went on down the corridor to mini-apartment 218.

"Here we are," the other said. "Home again." He activated the door and let Rex precede him.

The apartment was one room larger than Bader's own and he grunted a sour admission that it was well done. Zimmerman was evidently in the way of being a travel buff and had furnished his place and decorated it from a score of lands which doesn't usually admit of good taste but in this case it came off.

"Come on in here to my escape sanctum," Dave Zimmerman said. "Not as swank as Roget's maybe but at least we'll be safe from any spot checking of our conversation."

Rex followed him into the inner room, saying, "Spot checking?"

Dave looked at him from the side of his eyes, even as he made

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his way over to the room's autobar. "For a detective, you're on the naïve side, Bader. Surely you know the authorities can bug any TV screen in the country at will."

Rex Bader slumped down into one of the room's three comfort chairs. "Sure. If they want to. But what's this spot-checking routine?"

"Pseudo-whiskey?" the other asked at the bar, and at Rex Bader's nod, dialed the drink. "It's fairly recent. Just for luck, the IABI periodically, and usually at random, checks the conversations going on in private homes."

"And this is supposed to be a free country!"

David Zimmerman brought the drinks, handed Rex his, and then sat down across from him. He said, "A citizenry has to be ever alert, Bader, or its liberties erode away, a bit here, a bit there until you have a totalitarian government on your hands."

He made a face. "The spot checking and bugging of private pocket phones? That's one of the big reasons that everybody who can builds an escape sanctum room into their homes. No TV screen. Usually, you even leave your pocket phone in the next room when you enter a sanctum. No contact with the outside world. You can relax. You can talk. It's possible but damn difficult to bug a sanctum. Practically impossible in the really good ones."

"Then how are you aware of my conversation with Coolidge?"

Zimmerman grinned at him, and jiggled the ice in his drink. "I said practically impossible. Besides, Coolidge's office is no sanctum."

Rex slugged down his own drink. "Look. This bugged phone of mine. Why can't I simply take it to a technician and have him disconnect the bugging device?"

"You could, but whoever is monitoring you would immediately know and if they want you monitored badly enough they could take other steps."

"Such as?"

Zimmerman jiggled his ice again. "If they wish to go to the extreme, they can even plant an electronic device in your head, below the scalp and skull. They do it with some criminals. With such a goody in your skull they can drop you unconscious—or dead for that matter—any time they wish, such as if you tried to have it removed surgically."

Rex Bader gave it up, at least for the time being. "O.K. Let's get to the point. Who are you? What do you want?"

"I'm one of those who want you to take on Roget's proposition." Zimmerman added, "And do a chore or so for us, while doing it."

"Oh, *no!*"

"Oh, yes."

"I know. I know. And you're all set to pay off big."

The other shook his head ruefully and indicated the room in which they sat with a vague wave

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of his hand. "Does it look as though I'm in a position to hand over big sums, Bader?"

"Then why should I take on a dangerous mission to the Soviet Complex when I've already turned down half a dozen others all of whom offer me . . . how did one put it . . . remuneration beyond my dreams of avarice?"

Zimmerman smiled slightly and said, "That sounds like Temple Norman. However, the answer is that we weren't sure but from what we found in your dossier, we thought you might be amenable."

"My dossier! Has somebody been mimeographing my dossier and gone into business peddling it on street corners?"

Zimmerman chuckled. He said, "Our organization has access to the National Data Banks, Bader. We don't exercise it unless we have very good reason. We believe in the laws involving the privacy of a citizen's dossier."

"What organization?"

His host leaned back in his comfort chair and stuck his hands in his pockets. He said slowly, "Rex Bader, do you believe in the democratic ethic?"

"I believe in it but I think there's precious litt'e of it left in the world, if there ever was much."

Zimmerman nodded. "I agree. Bader, have you ever analyzed Meritocracy as a socioeconomic system?"

"In the past few days I've had it analyzed for me until it's running out my ears."

"It served its purpose, perhaps, in its day, like most of the socioeconomic systems that preceded it. But its day is done now."

"I've been telling people and telling them that I'm not political."

"Neither am I, not in the old sense of the word."

"Then what are you? What do you want? And why drag me into it, damn it?"

The other kept his relaxed position. "Bader, have you ever read anything about the Technocrats?"

"Never heard of them."

"They were an organization that sprang up for a time back in the 1930s. Chap named Howard Scott was their leading light. Some of their theories were based on the work of Thorstein Veblen."

"I've read some Veblen."

"Yes, I know. 'The Theory of the Leisure Class' and 'The Engineers and the Price System'."

Rex Bader stared at the other. "How could you possibly know that? It's been at least ten years."

"You forget it's a computerized world, Bader. I should have said that I knew you had checked them out on your library booster TV screen. Whether or not you read them, is another thing. But the computers keep record of every book tapped, for statistical purposes, among others."

Rex Bader shook his head in

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wonder. "And you've gone to the bother of checking up on every book I've dialed from the library banks?"

"Only since you've been an adult. But to go on. The Technocrats advocated a socioeconomic system in many ways similar to Meritocracy. They called the gigantic bases of their system to be Functional Sequences, but the picture they drew was remarkably similar to the cosmocorps of today. And the engineers who were to direct these ultra-large industries were similar to our present-day Meritcrats and achieved their position in much the same manner. They were to be appointed from above; a system, of course, that has nothing to do with the democratic ethic."

"What has the appointment of an official in an industry got to do with democracy?"

"We'll get to that. Bader, the Meritocracy has one built-in defense against potential enemies. It elevates the best elements in the lower classes into its ranks and it even seduces elements of the old rich stockholding class, who are smart enough, to get into its ranks. Because pay is so high for the top elements in Meritocracy and prestige so high that it is better to belong to the Meritocracy than to even the old rich.

"It's a new phenomenon in political economy, Bader. Under Meritocracy, both the lower class and the upper class lose their most brilliant members to the Meritcrats and hence those most capable of leading a revolt. For instance, under feudalism there was small chance of the newly emerging middle class of becoming feudalistic lords. It was possible, in individual cases, but not probable. Hence the best minds of the middle class remained in that class and plotted to overthrow feudalism. The British, almost alone, were canny enough to realize the situation and knighted or made lords of their best elements in the middle and even the working class, until, eventually, the House of Lords itself was dominated by new peers who had come up the hard way rather than simply inheriting ancient titles. Even the heads of the so-called Labor Party were made earls upon retirement."

Rex says, "It sounds like a good institution. You get to the top through your own ability."

Dave Zimmerman nodded, but there was a ruefulness on his face. "It was. A least at first. The trouble is this. Featherbedding is not limited to labor unions. It is widely practiced in political parties, in the military, in business and financing, government and religious organizations. Those who *belong* are rewarded for doing little or no work, except what they're told to do or say.

"The thing is, our society has become a hundredfold more complicated than any that has gone before, and methods of judging the

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contributions of a man are increasingly difficult. In primary jobs it is easily seen how capable a farmer, or hunter, or miner is. Even in the secondary trades, you can easily judge a craftsman. In tertiary jobs, those that render services to the primary and secondary, you can still judge a good teacher, a good policeman, or whatever, but it's more difficult. When you get to quaternary occupations, you've got to the point where they judge themselves."

"This seems to be my week for getting lectured," Rex muttered.

"Sorry. I'll try to cut it short. Favoritism, nepotism, you-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours-ism, is not unknown under Meritocracy, Bader, although the elimination of these was supposedly the basic thing. Today, someone with a job as esoteric as Chairman of the Board of a cosmoscorps doesn't really have to know anything about the product of the industry which he heads. The head of International Communications does not have to know any more about a TV phone than how to dial one. Nor do the next three or four levels of company officials below him. It gets even worse in the nation's political bureaucracy. A relative idiot, such as Senator Sam Hooker, can hold the highest of offices. For that matter, look back over the chief executives of this nation since the turn of the Nineteenth Century. How many of them would you consider really intelligent men of integrity?"

"Maybe half," Rex said dryly.

"You dreamer, you," Dave Zimmerman grinned.

"O.K. So what's the answer?"

"The Meritocracy, with its one vote per one earned dollar, has taken over the country. With the high pay of the top one percent of the cosmocorps company officials and the fact that the majority of the citizens have no votes at all since they subsist on NIT and earn no votes, we have a situation where this top Meritocracy is self perpetuating."

"And?"

"The answer, Rex Bader, is to return to democracy. Today, a man in authority in industry is appointed from above, supposedly from the ranks of those best qualified. From foreman right up to the manager of a department, or even of a whole industry. When you get to the very top, they appoint each other—supposedly on merit."

"So you want them elected from below. From foreman of a crew right up to the manager, or whatever."

"Yes."

Rex Bader grunted. "That's syndicalism."

"We don't like the word. It's a product of the Nineteenth Century and no longer applies in an advanced economy. Besides, the syndicalists blended in with the anarchists until you couldn't tell where

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one stopped and the other began. We're not anarchists. The whole conception doesn't make sense in a postindustrial society."

"O.K. So you're a modern version of syndicalists. What has this got to do with me and with Roget's basic idea of world government based on the cosmocorps?"

"Another drink?"

"No. Just an answer."

Zimmerman leaned forward earnestly, very seriously. "We, too, believe in world government. To that extent we are in basic agreement with Francis Roget and his group. However, we suspect, and it's more than a suspicion, that our own equal numbers must exist in the Soviet Complex. Their equivalent of the Meritocracy, the top Meritocracy, consisting largely of members of the Party, are perpetuating themselves, keeping the better jobs and the top political and military positions among themselves. The scientists, engineers and technicians who really keep the country going must be as disgusted with the situation as we are over here. While you're on this assignment for Roget, Bader, you'll be in an advantageous position to make initial contact with this group."

"To what end?"

"When this big change comes, the turnover from the present type national state government to world government, there is bound to be confusion. At that time if we and our equal numbers in the Soviet Complex are organized, we might well be able to make the changes we wish."

"Here we go again," Rex Bader said, coming to his feet. "Look, could I have my pocket phone back?"

Zimmerman stood, too, and for the first time some of the easy-going charm was gone. He said, "Your father's career before you and your own dossier suggested that you had some social consciousness, some feeling of duty to the society in which you live, Bader."

"O.K. Great. And now can I have my pocket phone?"

The other narrowed his eyes infinitesimally, but then he spun on his heel and headed for the door of the small sanctum. He opened it.

In the other room sat the man to whom he had tossed the pocket phone after finagling it away from Rex Bader. Zimmerman, holding silence, made a jerk of his head toward Rex.

The other reached down for the bulky briefcase beside him and activated its zipper. The interior of the carrying case seemed lined with some sort of lead, or other grayish metal, composition. He brought forth Rex Bader's pocket phone and handed it over. Then put his finger to his lips, indicating the need for silence.

"Nuts," Rex muttered and headed for the door.

He hadn't even thought it all out

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by the time he reached the building which housed the offices of the top officials of International Communications Incorporated. He went to the same entrance through which Temple Norman had introduced him earlier in the week. The same uniformed doorman was on duty.

"I'd like to see either Mr. Roget, or Mr. Norman," Rex said.

The Bulgarian admiral gave him the fisheye for a moment, but then said, "Yes, sir." He turned to a screen, spoke into it, waited a moment, spoke again, waited a full five minutes, spoke again.

He turned back to Rex Bader. "A moment, sir."

It was more than a moment, but at long last a beautifully groomed girl emerged from the ornate structure. ICI knew how to pick the hired help, Rex Bader decided inwardly.

She said, "Mr. Bader?"

"That's right."

"Follow me, please."

He followed her, taking exactly the same route Norman had led him along. He could have found the way himself, of course.

At the penthouse, she led the way down a corridor different from the one Roget's assistant had utilized and they wound up before a door only slightly less swank than that of the Chairman of the Board of ICI.

She looked into the identity screen and murmured, "Mr. Bader, Mr. Norman."

The door opened, Rex Bader entered, the girl disappeared.

When one achieves to a rank as high as that of Francis Roget his business office can be so informal as not even to include a desk. Temple Norman had not as yet reached those dizzy altitudes. He had a desk.

He looked up and said, "Yes, Mr. Bader. You have changed your mind on accepting . . . ah, Mr. Westley's assignment?"

"Not yet. I want to talk to Roget about it."

Norman stood. He was as immaculate and supercilious as he had been on the first occasion of their meeting. Half a dozen generations of aristocracy, Bader decided. Maybe there was something in heredity. Though, come to think of it, the founder of the hefty Norman fortune had been little better than a bandit.

Norman said, "I have been in touch with Mr. . . ." he broke it off. "What did you call him?"

"You heard me," Rex said, an element of disgust in his voice. "You know I'm a detective. Just how hard do you think it was to check your identities?"

Temple Norman coughed gently and looked as though the other wasn't quite playing cricket. "Very well, I contacted Mr., ah, Roget while you were on your way up. He will be able to see you immediately."

They made their way down one

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corridor, around a corner, and wound up eventually at the door which led into the magnate's sanctumlike office.

Their identities cleared, the door opened. This was, Rex Bader had decided, the damnedest floor of offices he had ever been in. Save for the doorman and the girl, he had seen no other personnel except Temple Norman. How could you be a recluse and the Chairman of the Board of possibly the largest cosmocorps in the world?

Francis Roget was dressed more formally today, even to a suit, a conservative baby-blue shirt and a cravat to match. He had been standing near a window. He turned, looked at Rex quizzically and came over to shake hands.

"Be seated, my dear Bader. You have changed your mind?"

Rex said, "Is it at all possible to bug this room?"

The magnate's eyes went up. "Why, no. As a matter of fact, Mr. Bader, this is one of the most efficient sanctums possible. I have a scrambler on power at all times, besides other precautions. No electronic device will work here."

Rex sat down. "I see. O.K., look, why me? Why did you pick me for this liaison job?"

"The computers picked you, my dear Bader. You were the private investigator in all the United States that most nearly filled all the qualifications."

"Which were . . . ?"

"Beyond the obvious ones including character and health, the most important of all was a good basic knowledge of political economy. It's a qualification most men in your field fail to have. Of course, there are IABI operatives well versed in socioeconomics, but we had need of a private agent, available for hire, not a government man."

"I see. O.K., what did you figure on paying me? You mentioned some high-flown remuneration."

"Indeed I did. What would you say to ten thousand pseudo-dollars a week with a guarantee of at least a month of employment?"

Rex Bader hissed softly through his teeth.

Temple Norman stood off to one side where his superior couldn't see his face. His nostrils were high, in amusement.

Rex shook his head. "But I don't want pseudo-dollars. I want a block of ICI stock deposited to my account in Switzerland."

Roget scowled at him. "But why?"

"In case I have to go on the run. Deposit forty thousand dollars worth of your stock to my account in, say, Berne, and I'll take the job."

Temple Norman said indignantly, "And what guarantee is there that you will not simply go to Switzerland, acquire the stock, and abscond with it?"

Rex said dryly, "Evidently, one

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of the other qualifications my dossier said I had was integrity."

Francis Roget looked at his assistant in impatience. "That will be all, my dear Temple." His eyes went back to Rex. "Very well, you're on. Though I assure you, those precautions are needless. Your cover will be excellent. This whole project is very hush, hush."

"Ha!" Rex muttered.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Nothing. Let's have the details."

When he emerged from the building, several hours later, he carried a newly acquired briefcase. He said to the doorman, "Could you summon a car for me?"

"Certainly, sir." The fisheye was gone.

The car wasn't necessary. An official-looking vehicle pulled up and Tag Dermott looked out at him from the position behind the manual controls. John Mickoff sat to his right.

Dermott growled, "Get in, Bader. The Chief wants to talk to you."

"I know," Rex said.

Rex Bader said to John Coolidge, "All right, there's just one proviso."

"And that is?" The Inter-American Bureau of Investigation director's face was characteristically barren of expression.

"In spite of Colonel Simonov's assurances, double-dealing can result in some ruffled feelings, and these people are up to their ears in money. They can buy anything.

IN TIMES TO COME *Next month we introduce a new author—not a new pseudame!—M. R. Anver. He has an interesting problem indeed. Biological warfare is a subtle business to begin with—but it does require a carrier. If the disease is one that has an incubation period of minutes or seconds, and can only be spread by a carrier—how does the enemy expect to spread it?*

Hunting down something like an atomic bomb hidden in a city can be difficult; it could be masquerading as a brass pot with a rubber tree growing in it in the lobby of the local Grand Hotel.

But how do you hunt down a virus—particularly one which has as its only noticeable symptom "he dropped dead"?

And just to make it cozy for the searchers—the interspecies interplanetary peace conference was, obviously, the primary target of the attack! The yarn appropriately is called "Dragon's Teeth."

Also, of course, the conclusion of "The Five Way Secret Agent." Presumably you've now read Part I in this issue, so now know who is interested in Our Hero's reluctant mission as a double-double-and-one agent. Be ingenious! Figure out how he can come out of that one alive before Reynolds tells you! ■ *The Editor.*

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Certainly revenge on a small timer such as myself."

"So?"

"So I want to be paid in advance. To a numbered account in Switzerland. Both my pay from you and whatever contributions the *Chrezvychainaya Komissiya* might want to make through Simonov."

Coolidge nodded. "Very well. The request isn't untoward."

Rex said, "There's another thing. I want you to discontinue bugging my pocket phone."

John Coolidge looked at him for a long cold moment. Finally, "How did you know you were being monitored?"

"I'm a detective."

"How did you find out?"

Rex snorted, as though in contempt. "In actuality, I didn't until right this moment," he lied. "However, I knew it was possible and on the off chance that you were doing it, I just accused you. Your reaction bears out my suspicions."

Coolidge nodded, grudgingly. "Very well. But why are you so anxious?"

Rex snorted again. "How would you like to be monitored twenty-four hours a day? How would you like . . ."

"All right, all right. It isn't really necessary anyway, now that you've taken your stand with us. It will be discontinued."

Rex said grimly, "And on top of that, I'm going to take my pocket phone to a technician and see that he permanently jimmies that part of it that allows for monitoring."

Coolidge's face was cold but he merely nodded acceptance.

Back in his mini-apartment, a new sheaf of papers added to those contributed by Francis Roget, Rex Bader thought it out for a moment. He tossed the briefcase to a couch and sat down in front of the room's TV phone screen.

He said into it, "International Diversified Industries."

A girl faded into the screen and said, "International Diversified Industries, Incorporated. Good day."

"I want to talk to Miss Sophia Anastasis."

The girl looked slightly startled. She said waveringly, "I'll connect you with one of Miss Anastasis's junior secretaries, sir. Whom should I say is calling?"

"Rex Bader."

He went through two levels of secretaries, evidently junior and senior, and finally wound up with the natty member of the twosome that had attacked him the other day, Luis. Luis looked at him without speaking.

Rex said, "I want to see Miss Anastasis."

"Why do you want to see her, Bader?"

"Tell her I'm ready to reconsider her offer."

To be concluded

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Hey But No Presto

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One problem with psi is, of course,
that there are times when it's hard to keep your mind
focused on what it's supposed to focus on . . .

BY JACK WODHAMS

Illustrated by Leo Summers

They peered through the viewing slot watching for him to go.

Lon, born and raised on Bon Eden, was going home. Home was Earth—crowded, vital, vivid Earth. Home just could not be explained; it had to be experienced. The settlers' children just *had* to visit Earth to know, to directly renew, a cultural contact that was conveyed inadequately sans atmosphere by information services.

Lon stood in a pool of light. He knew he was in a small room, but the blackness beyond the cone that illumined him had the density of the infinite. He stared, as instructed, at the numeral "I" that hung seemingly far and high in the darkness in front of him. The suspended number was a brilliant nonradiant turquoise, clear-cut, and the sound that came to his ears to hypnotically concentrate his attention was "One—One—One—One—"

He gazed, let his mind empty, let his head nod slightly to the rhythm. "One—One—One—"

Then, before the eyes of his kinfolk and friends, quite instantly Lon vanished.

"Welcome to Skuldugrin," the beaming Spoker said, extending his hand.

"Uh?" Lon stepped past the sleepy-eyed man in the controller's cradle and out of the switch-tube. He set his bags down, took the proffered hand and scanned his surroundings. "It's not quite what I expected."

"Oh?" Spoker genially wrung his hand, snapped free fingers to summon a luggage boy. "You'll find everything here that you could possibly wish for. Come, let me show you the way."

Lon followed the man and in passing goggled at a quartet of abandoned naiads disporting in a pool by the path. He was led on, tripped by the bottom step of a series that ascended to a wide, low building.

Lon mounted the steps, looking

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about him all the way. The air was heavy and warmly humid. The abundance of vegetation and trees strongly portrayed a jungle setting. The whole atmosphere suggested a tropical clime. He had never seen such deeply blue "greenery," such a clear, palely white sky.

He joined his host at the top of the steps. "I thought Stockholm was in the northern latitudes, and cold. Is this an artificial area?"

Spoker laughed. "Good heavens, no! Stockholm, oh dear! What a fortunate young man you are. Come in, come in. Oh dear, it's winter in Stockholm now and it's freezing. What a good piece of luck for you."

Lon trailed after the man to the reception desk, while watching his luggage tangentially head off into some inner recess of the building. "If . . . If this is not Stockholm, where is it then?" Lon asked. "It's not Africa, or the Brazilia station, is it? Look, I particularly wanted to go to Europe first . . ."

Spoker slid himself behind the counter, spun the form book, handed a pen to Lon. "You'll like it here. Just sign your name on the entry clearance, and thumb-tag the three spaces down the side. That'll give you club membership, temporary citizen's rights and everything. I'll give you the Regency Room—glorious panoramic view over our, ah, Grand Canyon."

"Now wait a minute. I don't know if I want to stay here yet. I might want to stay somewhere else," Lon demurred.

"What? You must be joking. There *is* no other place to stay. The greater part of the Skuldugrin charm lies in the unspoilt security of this one, exclusively private, establishment."

"But. . . . What? Skuldugrin? What part of Earth is that?"

Spoker chuckled. "Lad, you're not on Earth at all. You know that, don't you? You come from Stockholm, you say? Ah, you must be very glad to get here. You won't regret it, believe me."

Lon was stunned. "You mean I'm not on Earth at all? You mean . . . You mean I'm on some other world entirely?"

"Skuldugrin," Spoker said simply. "Now don't tell me that you have come here unintentionally. There must have been some wish-fulfillment on your part, however unconscious, for a vacation in paradise."

"But I wanted to go to Earth!"

"Ah." Spoker became solemn. "Well now, that would make you an illegal immigrant."

"But I didn't want to come here! I should be on Earth! There's been some mistake!"

"Obviously. This is serious. Still," Spoker smiled bravely, "we can soon sort it out. Now let me see, there's your arrival and disembarkation fees, portage, misuse of facilities . . ."

"What? What's all that? What misuse of facilities?"

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"Clearly you appropriated the place of an expected guest," Spoker said, a trifle severely. "Now heaven knows where he might be and the expense and loss in revenue that this will incur. If you *were* a guest it wouldn't matter, but if you're not then you have caused a great deal of inconvenience."

"It's not *my* fault that I'm here," Lon argued. "It's the Intersol people; they've made an error."

"You can take it up with them at Head Office," Spoker said calmly. "That is your concern."

"I will!" Lon said. "I want to be passed on to Earth immediately!"

"Ah, yes. Well, I expect that can be arranged. Once we've sorted out your entry permits and things and you've paid duty on certain items that you might have been hoping to get through Customs. We don't normally bother *guests,* but with transients, of course, we can't be too careful."

"But I'm not a transient!"

"Hm-m-m, yes, that's what you say. You seem to be in a suspiciously great hurry to get to Earth. C'ha. Yes," Spoker became very businesslike, "I should think that with fines and one thing and another, you'll be lucky to get out of it for less than five hundred credits."

"What!"

"And then there's your fare out, of course. Say another four hundred at least, not counting placement exit visas and so forth."

"But my fare's been paid!" Lon howled.

"Yes, well, that's what you say. But *we* don't know that, do we?"

"But four hundred credits! Why, that's . . . that's . . ." Lon was rendered speechless.

"It's the height of the season here," Spoker replied blandly, "big demand. Off-season rates do not apply for another two or three months and, of course, if you're not even a temporary citizen, you do not gain the major discount concessions that enables residents to take advantage of our economy excursions for the low, low midweek price of fifty credits . . ."

"You're a swindler!" Lon bawled. "I demand to see the Intersol representative!"

"*I* am the Intersol representative."

"Then I want to see the Settlers Commissioner!"

"*I* am the Settlers Commissioner. Lad," Spoker explained, "we are a small community and have lately branched out into the tourist industry in an endeavor to assist the local budget. Our government," he understated, "is very tight and bound by strict regulations, although the President has the power to immediately enact any legislation he may deem necessary."

"I'll see the President then!"

Spoker smiled. "How do you do?" and *ting!* his forefinger tapped a small bell.

"Why you . . . you're a crook!"

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Lon shouted. "This place—there's nothing here. You're a shyster with a one-man empire, is that it?"

"Precisely," Spoker said affably, offering the pen again. "Why not become a citizen for a while and enjoy the benefits that this will entitle you to?"

Lon's fists bunched and he leaned, hot flushed and angry. "I'll ..." He became aware that he was flanked by two unnecessarily large men in black pants and strainingly bulged-out T-shirts.

"Meet my health instructors," Spoker said. "They'll keep you in good condition while you're here. They'll help keep you fit in any sport you care to undertake. That's if you join our group, of course. Now, why not be a dog and become a Skuldugrinian for a while, eh? Believe me, you'll find it very pleasant. There'll be a lot more guests arriving shortly, and as a local inhabitant you'll enjoy all the privileges of our progressive society."

"Uhuh." Lon looked from one to the other of the "President's" amiable-seeming helpers.

"It will guarantee you freedom from bothersome tithes and tariffs that aliens are subject to," Spoker inferred smoothly. "We have an isolationist policy that militates in favor of the locals, as you will discover and agree."

"Huh!" Lon took the pen. "Do I get to vote?" he said savagely.

"After twelve months residence," Spoker answered. "Sign here for three glorious weeks. You'll have a wonderful time—swimming, games, dancing, faro, and ah, ahem. You'll not regret a minute."

Lon scowled. A hundred credits a week. It was robbery. He looked around again and hesitated. He learned fast. Grudgingly he thumbprinted and signed.

Lionel Thanwick was the Transit Manager of Intersol Inc., and he was a very upset man. "Mr. Gultz, we just don't know where to look. Three persons missing, simply gone without trace. We . . . It's . . . What can we do?"

"Has anything like this ever happened before?" Boylen Gultz, General Investigator, was, as prescribed by his profession, quizzical.

"Never. Oh dear, oh dear. Years we've spent testing the method, years. Not the least trouble. Nothing like this." Agitatedly one hand kept squeezing the fingers of the other. "I've always been afraid, always. Now what can we do?"

"That's what I'm here for," Gultz said. "Can you give me more specific details—like who, what and where?"

"They've gone," Thanwick said, "just gone. From three different places. No connection there, none at all. No connection with each other. Simply disappeared."

"Yeah." Gultz took three steps to a dispensary and casually poured out two generous bourbons.

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Behind him Thanwick rambled on. "It was too good to be true. After all the expense. And when this gets out we'll be finished. Just when we're starting to break even. Oh dear."

Gultz handed him a glass. "Now, Mr. Thanwick, try to relax. It could be something quite ordinary and unremarkable—something, perhaps, that you have overlooked."

Thanwick took a gulp of his drink, grimaced but steadied. "No. They've reappeared nowhere. I've checked every station. In the early days we had some faults with 'one,' 'eleven' and 'one hundred and eleven,' but we dropped all repeat numbers and the trouble was corrected. Anyway, that didn't *lose* people—only misplaced them."

"I see. And the three that have gone have not turned up anywhere else?"

"No. No, they've gone." Thanwick took another gulp. "They've gone into the ether. Permanently. When this gets out," he rubbed his glass in his palm, "it will mean the end of our operations."

"You're exaggerating," Gultz said. "A few people disappear now and then—it's by far the most expedient and dirt-cheap way to travel. You'd have to lose a far higher percentage of customers before the system becomes prohibitive. Till now it has been the safest and quickest transport that has ever been conceived, right?"

"Yes, yes," Thanwick nodded, "but you don't fully comprehend. It's the mystery of the thing, you see. If a passenger fails to arrive at *any* of our stations, where can he possibly be? Oblivion! To have a crash, a mangled body, is something visible, tangible, and a risk that can be recognized, but to just go *phoof*"—his fingers exploded expressively—"that is going into total nonexistence which is psychologically very unattractive. Even when they're dead, people like to know that they exist."

"You've checked back thoroughly on every station?"

"Checked, checked, double-checked, triple-checked, quadruple-checked. Every one. And no sign. Not the least sign."

"And who are the missing people?"

"Who? Well, there was a chemist from Rhyntote, a young lady from Howsterland, and a man from Bon Eden. Widely disparate places."

"And where did they fail to show? Were they all going to the same destination?"

"What? No. Well, yes. No. They were all meant to arrive at one or other of our Earth stations. Tokyo, Stockholm and, ah, Moscow."

"Were they V.I.P.s?"

"No. No, not as far as we can make out. They were just ordinary people."

"Did they have anything in common?"

"No, not a thing as far as we can

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see. Completely unrelated. The chemist was taking a long-service leave. The Eve Eden man was coming on a tourist visa, and so was the Heatherland woman."

Gultz pondered. He walked over to gaze at a poster stuck on the wall. It read: The Intersol Psicle, Safe. Sure. Superspeed, The Only Way To Psi. "You've no means of tracing where they went to?"

Thanwick drained his glass. "None." There was vacancy in his stare. "If they go, they go. We can't say what might have happened. I've said all along that something like this would happen someday."

"How about the receivers, can they give you no clue?"

"No, no." Thanwick's hands waved and he began to walk around his desk. "We have a phenomenon that works. As yet we don't know why it works, but it seemed so reliable. It went through development and trial stages without a hitch. So, knowing that it worked but not why, we went ahead. And now we have a network opening out as fast as we can find locations to site a station. It was too easy, too easy altogether. Now we're starting to lose people."

"They can't just disappear," Gultz said. "They must have gone somewhere. Perhaps a far new station has gone into operation a little early?"

"No." Thanwick shook his head. "We've checked. They've gone. Just gone."

"Hm-m-m."

The desk buzzer sounded. Thanwick snapped it on. "Yes?"

"Mr. Thanwick? Uh. Sir, uh, we've, uh, it seems that, uh, another passenger has, uh, gone astray, sir."

"What?" Thanwick gasped. "Oh dear. Oh dear, what are we going to do?"

Gultz took over the intercom. "Where did it happen, what receiver?"

"Uh, right here, sir, on our own station."

"Great," Gultz said. "Hold everything as it is, I'll be right there."

Boylen Gultz scratched his head. "Doesn't leave much to go on, does it? Explain the principle to me again. Slowly."

"Not the principle, but the routine," the head technician corrected. "First, we have the selection of suitably sensitive people. Actually we've found that twins are the best, they seem to have a natural aptitude and understanding of the task required. Anyway, the sensitive is wired to an amplifier panel which magnifies his alpha waves. He sits in the cradle and looks at the light cone and the number ahead of him —or of her, as the case may be. If he is sending, the person or goods is clearly visible in the cone, and the destination station number is plainly visible above. If he is receiving, the cone is empty and the

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orange 'one' is the 'in' locking marker."

"I get that but, ah," Gultz rubbed his chin, "the transfer bit. . . ?"

"Well, in the case of Mr. Coster, who should have arrived here, there should have been a visual sympathy between sender and receiver. That is to say, they should both have been looking at an identical scene, orange 'one,' and so forth. Mr. Coster would have been in one scene of course, but as sender and receiver merge mentally into oneness, what is seen is what is there rather than what is not there. Thus, the blended mutuality of minds would be a unit singly accepting Mr. Coster as a reality in those circumstances against that background. When the sender broke contact, 'died' as it were, Mr. Coster would have remained part of the existence of the receiver, do you see? Mr. Coster cannot cease to exist to the receiver's mind, and the receiver's consciousness ensures that Mr. Coster *is* rather than is not and so"—he shrugged—"there is a transfer, an exchange."

"Ah . . ." Gultz held his cheek. "Yes."

"The state of 'being' is immovable, and the two controllers' fuse briefly into one awareness, and one awareness can only be conscious of the entirety of its experience. And once the passenger is locked into that consciousness, he remains with the half that does not cut out, the half of the whole that is indelibly conscious of him. The amplified alpha waves heighten the sense and power of 'being,' do you see? And this, of course, helps considerably."

"Uh, yes," Gultz said. "Of course." He wriggled his shoulders, folded his arms. "Well, that seems straightforward enough. But, ah, Mr. Coster didn't arrive, did he?"

"No."

"But he did leave the other end?"

"Yes."

"Ah, yes. Well then." Gultz sniffed. "Yes. Very interesting. You, ah," he coughed, "have no idea where he might have gone?"

"None whatsoever. We're double-checking now, but nothing has come to light so far."

"Y-e-s. Well," briskly, "I'd like to talk to the receiver, may I?"

"Er, well, yes, I suppose so. But please be careful, won't you? Quite understandably he's somewhat put out by this business . . ."

"You have performed successful transfers before?"

"Of course I have, you fool," the receiver said petulantly.

"Exactly," Gultz soothed. "So, if there was anything unusual about this one, you'd have noticed it. Right?" He was hopeful.

"There was something unusual," the man admitted.

"There was? Good. What was it?"

"The passenger didn't arrive," the man said acidly.

"Ah." Gultz masked his disap-

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pointment as best he could. "Was there anything else? Some little thing? Something uncommon?"

The man looked up at him. Plainly his professional transmitting pride had been wounded. He frowned. He could visibly be seen to be debating with himself. "You're a detective, aren't you?"

"Yes. I want to get to the bottom of this as much as you do."

"Yah." The man squinted. "You won't laugh if what I say sounds silly?"

"No," Gultz promised. "I'd be grateful for anything."

"Yes." The man cogitated. "Well, the one funny thing that *did* happen was that the number 'one' at one point seemed to change into a naked woman with one elbow stuck out. You know, to make the tag on the 'one'."

"Uh?" Gultz was nonplussed. "A naked . . . ? Oh." He scratched the corner of his lip. "Is that all?"

"That's it," the man said with irascible finality. "Go on, laugh, everybody else does."

"No," Gultz said sincerely. "No, I see nothing at all to laugh at . . ."

Thanwick on the screen looked harassed. "Mr. Gultz, please, this can't go on. We can't keep putting people off. Relatives, acquaintances, business people—some of them are beginning to kick up a fuss. It'll be impossible to keep the matter hushed up for much longer. Have you found anything yet?"

"I have a theory . . ." Gultz said.

"Mr. Gultz," Thanwick sounded plaintive, "we want more than theories. Another one went missing not ten minutes ago. That makes twenty-two over the last seven days. To carry on like this without giving the public warning is scandalous. And I can't tell you how upsetting it is to our transporting personnel; they're making mistakes, and we're getting a higher percentage of abortive links."

"Yes. Yes, look, just give me a couple more days," Gultz said. "I've . . . I've got something," he lied. "I just need a little more time."

Thanwick wavered. "Have you? Have you got something, I mean? What is it?"

"Ah, I'm not at liberty to say," Gultz said darkly, resorting to the tantalizing cloak of mystery that is permitted to investigators. "I want to obtain positive proof before I name and implicate certain persons."

"Oh." Thanwick dithered, not daring to hope. "You will let us know as soon as you can? Straightaway, as soon as you get something definite? Mr. Gultz, please, if you find something, please let us know immediately."

"As soon as the last piece of evidence falls into place I'll let you know," Gultz asserted sternly. "Now, this latest one—it conforms to the points I've drawn to your attention?"

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"Yes. Yes, I think so, but . . ."

"Try not to worry too much," Gultz urged. "I believe that all the missing passengers are probably alive and well somewhere. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'd like to do some more work on a plan that I have in mind."

"Oh. Yes, of course, Mr. Gultz. Oh, by all means. I'm sorry if I disturbed you."

Gultz soberly accepted the apologies, bade good-bye as a man already heavily preoccupied, and gladly broke the connection.

Wow. Gultz held his head. A plan? Fact: All the victims had been booked to arrive at one or another of the Earth stations. Fact: All Earth stations, in deference to its initiator's prime and traffic density, were numbered "one," station differentiation being made by color, white, yellow, orange, red, et cetera. Fact: Nearly all victims were potential tourists. Fact: At a crucial point in most disappearances the figure "one" momentarily seemed to take the form of a nude young woman. Fact: Women senders and receivers had so far been unassociated with such freight "loss."

Gultz sat back. Where to look for someone who had quite literally disappeared? How to define possible causes when the process involved was itself indefinable? There was no trail. It was instanter *phut.* But . . . What clues there were had a consistency that plainly indicated intelligent selection rather than random ill-fortune. That people in fact—and this thought grew increasingly more unavoidable—were being hijacked. To what purpose? To be slaves upon some uninviting world? To be used perhaps in illegal medical experiments? To be mentally corrupted into spies or thieves? And how was it done? There was interpolation and usurpation employed somehow, obviously—but how? When the conveying method itself was at best only partially understood by its operators, what kind of wrench could be used and just where was the loose nut in the machinery?

Whether by accident or design, where did the lost people go? Senders and receivers could give no hint. The lost people could be anywhere, anywhere in the galaxy within range where a beam, focusing device, snatcher or whatever it was, could have been assembled. Such an instrument could be anywhere, on some remote faraway spot or—and this was a nagging possibility—could be right here on Earth. It could be. Yes, it could be.

Gultz sweated. Could it be aliens picking up samples? No. Unlikely. No, there was a pattern there. A pattern of a kind. It had the flavor of human motivation. Yet the people kidnapped were unremarkably ordinary; were neither brilliant nor stupid, neither rich nor poor; were just average ordinary folk. The on-

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ly thing that they had in common was . . . free time. Yes, in one way or another they had all been vacationers.

Very well. Gultz was not wildly enthusiastic about his own idea, but it had gained more and more prominence in his mind as being the only way to find out. He put through a call to Intersol to make an appointment.

Gultz switched from the Rhode Island station to Had Lebad, and from Had Lebad to Golglobe, The Tourists Paradise. From Golglobe he switched back to Tokyo. No takers. From Tokyo Gultz switched out to GreenGreen, The Holiday Joyworld, and from GreenGreen to the company world of BWICI. From BWICI he switched back to the Wooloomooloo station in Sydney, Australia. No takers.

In Wooloomooloo Gultz puffed his cigar, set his hat, adjusted his snaptac about his neck, and was sure that he looked as much like a tourist as it was possible to look. Determinedly he had himself sent out from Wooloomooloo to the world of Aqualand, The Mariner's-Mecca . . .

In all, Gultz successfully shuttled between twenty-three human-invaded worlds and Earth—without being snatched.

Weary, and both somewhat relieved and disappointed, he took time out at his last port of call, Bon Eden, to rest for a while and have his body checked and serviced. His hands had a bad rash from exposure to some unkindly sun; some undiscoverable flealike creature was playing merry hell around his waistband; and he had developed an odd half-sneezing complaint that kept tickling him into "Aaah . . . Aaah . . . Aaah . . ." but never peaking enough for him to "Chooo!" This made him feel rather foolish and he became quite depressed.

However, the quarantine team on Bon Eden were very efficient and after treatment and a solid eight-hours rest, Gultz felt in condition fit enough to doggedly carry on. His time was running out. He would have to come up with something shortly or know the humiliation of having to confess failure. And flicking out in the void could be better than that.

After a hearty meal of unfamiliarly-flavored seemingly familiar comestibles, Gultz lit yet another cigar and, sighing, prepared himself for another spate of to-and-froing.

"Welcome, sir, to Skuldugrin," Spoker said warmly. "So glad you could come. Andrew, take the gentleman's bags. Now, sir, if you'll just come this way. . . ?"

Gultz looked around. Well, well. This, most certainly, was *not* Rhode Island.

"I *know* it's what he wanted,"

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Thanwick cried in anguish, "but what if he never comes back?"

Gultz accepted the situation with an amenable grace that the management found most gratifying. In point of fact Gultz was vastly consoled by the conditions that pertained. Here was no diabolical plot, no torture, no forceful subjugation. No. What was being perpetrated here was simple financial coercion, a straightforward swindle. This he could handle. Now he could relax.

No longer feeling need for particular hurry, Gultz conformed, mixed with the other "guests," and pieced the story together.

He made some carefully casual inquiries, soon selected Lon and two or three other robust types as friends. And late that night Gultz went on the prowl and made a call. He also took a dozen sweep-shots of the local heavens.

Conscience-free and happy, he sneaked back into bed to sleep the sleep of the truly contented.

Morning.

Gultz slammed the large gong in the hallway and bawled, "Everybody here! Gather round everybody! Everybody here!"

He had chosen his time well and few had escaped the dining room to wander. He kicked up such a row that he soon had the bulk of Skuldugrin's population for his audience—including Spoker and his henchmen.

"Here I say, Mr. Gultz," Spoker said, hurrying up smiling but wary, "what's going on?"

"Ah," Gultz hung up the beater, put his hands into his pockets. "Now then, I am an investigator hired by Intersol."

"Oh," Spoker said. "Oh. Hm-m-m. You are, are you?" He did not appear to be overly dismayed by the revelation.

"Yes, I am. They retained me to find out where some of their customers have been vanishing to. By strange good fortune, I find that all the missing customers are here."

"They have not been harmed in any way," Spoker interposed, "and neither will they be harmed during their stay here. What we have on Skuldugrin is a better quality R and R center."

"You are obtaining your clients by illegitimate appropriation."

"An accident," Spoker said. "They arrive at our station unbidden. Purely accidental. It's happened so often that we've had to pass stringent laws to protect our fiscal status as a resort colony."

"Your station is an unauthorized one. It is not an Intersol station. It is a unit purposely fabricated to disrupt genuine Intersol traffic."

"We're not authorized at the moment," Spoker admitted, "but we're going to make application as soon as we can get a listing. Just at this time we are testing and, as you can see"—he gestured to his "guests"—"it's not working properly yet."

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You have deliberately hooked them from their desired course and by a mixture of implied threat and unaccredited autonomous law-making, have obliged the people so gathered to, ha! 'enjoy' a few weeks vacation here and submit to your exorbitant charges."

"Exorbitant! My word! If you only knew how much it cost to run a place like this. Ha!" Spoker said in turn. "This is a genuine vacation area, a beautiful place. And all my guests have willingly signed and sealed the contract agreement. They've been free to leave anytime, but they've been glad to stay."

"Humph!" Gultz snorted, "you make it more prohibitive to leave than to remain. You give them no choice. They don't *like* it, but they have to make the best of it."

"They have a pleasant time here," Spoker avowed. "I provide a service, that cannot be denied. If they arrive here instead of shipments of supplies, you can't blame me for that. I have to make up the deficit somehow. If Intersol cannot precisely control their transmissions, why should I suffer from their incompetence."

"If it was accidental, you might have a legitimate argument, but you are not a licensed operator and you have registered no complaint with the proper authorities. You can make what mumbo jumbo facade you like, but you have no case. On the other hand, the case against you is quite strong."

"I repeat, I have done no harm," Spoker said. "All visitors are free to leave at any time, subject, of course, to compensation being made under the terms of their contracts. This is only fair. In a business such as we have, we can't go chasing across the galaxy after bad debts."

"Your activity has not been harmless," Gultz said firmly. "The fact that your victims themselves have suffered no physical ill-usage does not mean that you have not violated their individual rights and, more importantly, does not exempt you from the great distress you have caused relatives and friends, or from the agony of doubt you have brought to torment many responsible persons within the Intersol organization. You have, in fact, perpetrated a very reprehensible public mischief."

Spoker pursed his lips. "You are distorting the facts. There is no statute that declares such mislocation a crime, and there is nothing on the books that gives Intersol exclusive rights to psi phenomena. The thought is laughable. How can there be lawbreaking over an intangible abstract that nobody knows what is? Senders, receivers, passengers, all must be to some degree guilty if there is misplacement."

"You cannot deny that your strategem has been to deliberately acquire 'guests' at the expense of

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Intersol. Your setup is exactly modeled to an Intersol unit. Intersol uses numbers; their competitors use letters or other distinctive symbols. Obviously it is in the best interests of operators to strictly adhere to the call signs they initially establish. Any other attitude could cause indescribable confusion and bring about the collapse of the entire system."

"You are dealing with an abstract," Spoker insisted. "A person leaving one Intersol station does not know what happens to him or why, and those given charge of his person cannot explain the process or define what occurs if the person goes absent permanently. That missing persons should fortunately and fortuitously have arrived here is a matter of good luck, and you should be grateful that they haven't simply blipped off into nothing."

Gultz breathed hard. "Your interference has been calculated and is soundly based on extant knowledge of the transfer process. You have violated moral and ethical codes, and you can, and will, be indicted accordingly for the unlawful interceptance of a public transport service."

"Oh come, come," Spoker mocked, "you don't think you could make such a charge stick, do you? Not seriously? On such a subject, with so many arguable imponderables? I don't have to tell you, do I, how interminable and costly litigation might be? With no guarantee that the decision would be in Intersol's favor, hey?"

"As the matter is of vital concern to all human-occupied worlds, there is no doubt that the consensus will certainly denounce and outlaw your unprincipled infiltration. However much you wriggle, the final verdict can only be one of condemnation."

"Ah, you think so, do you?"

"I know so," Gultz stated bluntly. "You may in some measure redeem yourself by conveying these people immediately to an Earthside destination. There is a receiver being kept open on Rhode Island especially for the purpose."

"Really?" Spoker rubbed his hands. "Well, well. Now see here, Mr. Gultz, as I have said, to take legal action is likely to be expensive, plus the fact that, ah, it might generate some very bad publicity, hey? And, um, also, you, ah, seem to forget that you are, ah, on foreign territory, as it were. You are in no position to dictate, Mr. Gultz, hey?"

"You propose to ignore my warning?"

"Not ignore, Mr. Gultz, no, no. But, ah, I may perhaps propose a reasonable solution of my own, hey? Now then, costwise you might agree that going to court might prove excessive. And, ah, plus the fact that in the meantime there might be an unavoidable continuation of the, um, errors, hey? Tut-tut. Very regrettable. But you must

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understand my position. I have invested a considerable sum in developing this out-of-the-way uncharted retreat and naturally I am unwilling to lose all over, ah, an amorphous technicality. You can appreciate that? However, as you say, all the occupied worlds have an interest in the undisturbed functioning of Intersol and, recognizing this, you may be sure that I would be only too willing to close down my seemingly disruptive unit, provided, of course, that I received suitable reimbursement. After all, I am a businessman, and you can see that I have no wish to sustain a great loss, hey? Clubbing together, I should think that all parties involved might be willing to contribute to purchase this, my own delightful secluded paradise. An asset, Mr. Gultz. I can assure you, worth every penny of the asking price."

"Ah, so that's it, huh? Well, I am authorized to do no bargaining," Gultz said. "Before anything else, the first thing you must do is send these people on to Earth."

"What?" Spoker pretended surprise. "But none have finished their vacations yet. No, no. Look, why don't you return? As negotiator you may explain the inadvertence of my position, that somehow we seem to be on a cross-wavelength here. Perhaps in the unconscious, who knows? The desire of operatives and clients to realize a genuinely superlative holiday site inevitably brings them here, hey? Tut-tut. We know so little of the all-pervading influence, don't we? So you can explain how all my funds are inextricably tied up in this enterprise and that, while being sympathetic to their concern over the side effects that have arisen, they must comprehend that I have no desire to become a pauper, hey?"

"Uh-uh," Gultz said. "Everybody must be returned and your station closed down. And as soon as possible."

"Oh dear, you are being obtuse and awkward," Spoker complained mildly. "You wish me to unequivocally give up everything and defenselessly throw myself upon the mercy of my hard-hearted and biased contemporaries. Tut-tut. Oh, Mr. Gultz, that won't do, it really won't do. Dear, oh dear, please, I ask you!"

"You have no choice. This intrusion into the transit lanes must cease. If you do not do so voluntarily, then other action will have to be taken."

Spoker smiled complacently. "Other action might take some considerable time to implement. Had you thought, for instance, to take record of the night sky or a sun-comp analysis-plate, I would like here to apologize for the poor results you may have obtained. As an amateur dabbler, I run a jambler continuously here. Purely in the interest of science, of course. But I

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admit that it does rather spoil any attempts to get a navigational fix on our precise location. I'm sorry about this, but," he spread his hands disarmingly, "who needs navigational fixes while on holiday? And one of our main aims is to guarantee absolute privacy."

"We're somewhere in Johnson's I45 parallax of Orion," one of the guests declared.

"Nonsense, the configuration is much closer to that delineated in Hexford's triangulation reference to Bootes," another countered.

"Yes," Spoker said, "you could be anywhere. Here, I am happy to say, you can be sure that you are truly away from it all."

"O.K." Gultz nodded. "Well, that's it, then. We're all stuck here until you give the word, right?"

"Anyone can leave at any time," Spoker reiterated. "There is no restraint beyond the honoring of incurred debts. However, you being something of a special envoy, we can waive the usual exit formalities to expedite your return to negotiate. And when you come back in, say, twelve hours from now, if you come via Howsterland en route for Nairobi, we'll have no trouble bringing you in. Shall we synchronize our watches?"

"There will be no need," Gultz said. "You are going to send everyone back." He still had one hand in his pocket. "I, ah, rather anticipated this. You see, I stuck a weldbomb on your Intersol tube last night. It is set to go off at midnight tonight or," as Spoker's chunky helpers took a step forward, "sooner if I press the button. Now you can either comply with my polite request, or you can remain here while I and a couple of others commandeer the standard ship you have tucked away for emergencies, and go for help. I don't have to tell you how long *that* might take."

"What?" Spoker was aghast. "You can't do that! What have you done? That's criminal! Destruction of an essential communication, of private property! A flagrant threat against sovereignty, of placing the lives of others in jeopardy! You can't have done such a totally irresponsible thing!"

Gultz grinned. "But I have. So you had better not waste too much time. Half the guests can go first to arrange your welcoming party, and the hard core of us rebels will follow after. I, uh, wouldn't advise you to try and make a run for it in the ship."

"This is . . . is . . . is monstrous," Spoker protested. "You had absolutely no right. It's . . . It's . . ."

"It's a coup d'etat," Gultz said genially. "You have established a regime—the regime has been overthrown. And by fully paid-up citizens. We now have a new constitution on Skuldugrin. Shall we go?"

"You won't get away with this!" Spoker stormed. "I'll sue! I'll report you to the Commission!"

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"You'd better give us the location reference so that someone can come out and rescue the controller after we've all gone."

And pleasantly Gultz ordered everyone to pack their bags.

People began to arrive at the reserved Rhode Island Intersol tube at five- and ten-minute intervals. Thanwick became almost delirious.

"Spoker found his control on the backworld of Hinterhill. An illiterate fellow, not too bright, but he's a powerful contact. It might pay you to send scouts there to look for talent."

"He's a criminal," Thanwick declared, "a renegade. I think we can do without his sort here."

"He was not fully aware of just what he was doing," Gultz said. "I think you'd be wise to claim him and others like him for your stable, where you can keep an eye on them."

"I'm not so sure. He was not that powerful. That trick with the nude numeral concentrated both ends to the middle. Our personnel *helped* him by preferring to see her rather than not. It was an ordinary case of appealing, successfully appealing, to the lewd instincts of men."

"Controllers are only human," Gultz observed.

The thought of the recalcitrant homespun disorganizer rankled and Thanwick said, "No doubt you mean well, Mr. Gultz, but company policy precludes unqualified recommendations to employ dubious operatives. His type, I think, is not the kind that Intersol would be happy to have on its staff. Our operatives," he added somewhat primly, "need to be persons of undisputed moral integrity."

"Oh-huh." Gultz sighed. "Well," he said resignedly, "you have my address for when you need me next . . ." ■

The Analytical Laboratory/January 1969

PLACE	TITLE	AUTHOR	POINTS
1.	Wolfling (Pt. 1)	*Gordon R. Dickson*	1.59
2.	Krishna	*Guy McCord*	2.36
3.	The Other Culture	*Ted Thomas*	2.81
4.	Classicism	*Murray Yaco*	3.78
5.	The Hidden Ears	*Lawrence A. Perkins*	4.23

THE EDITOR

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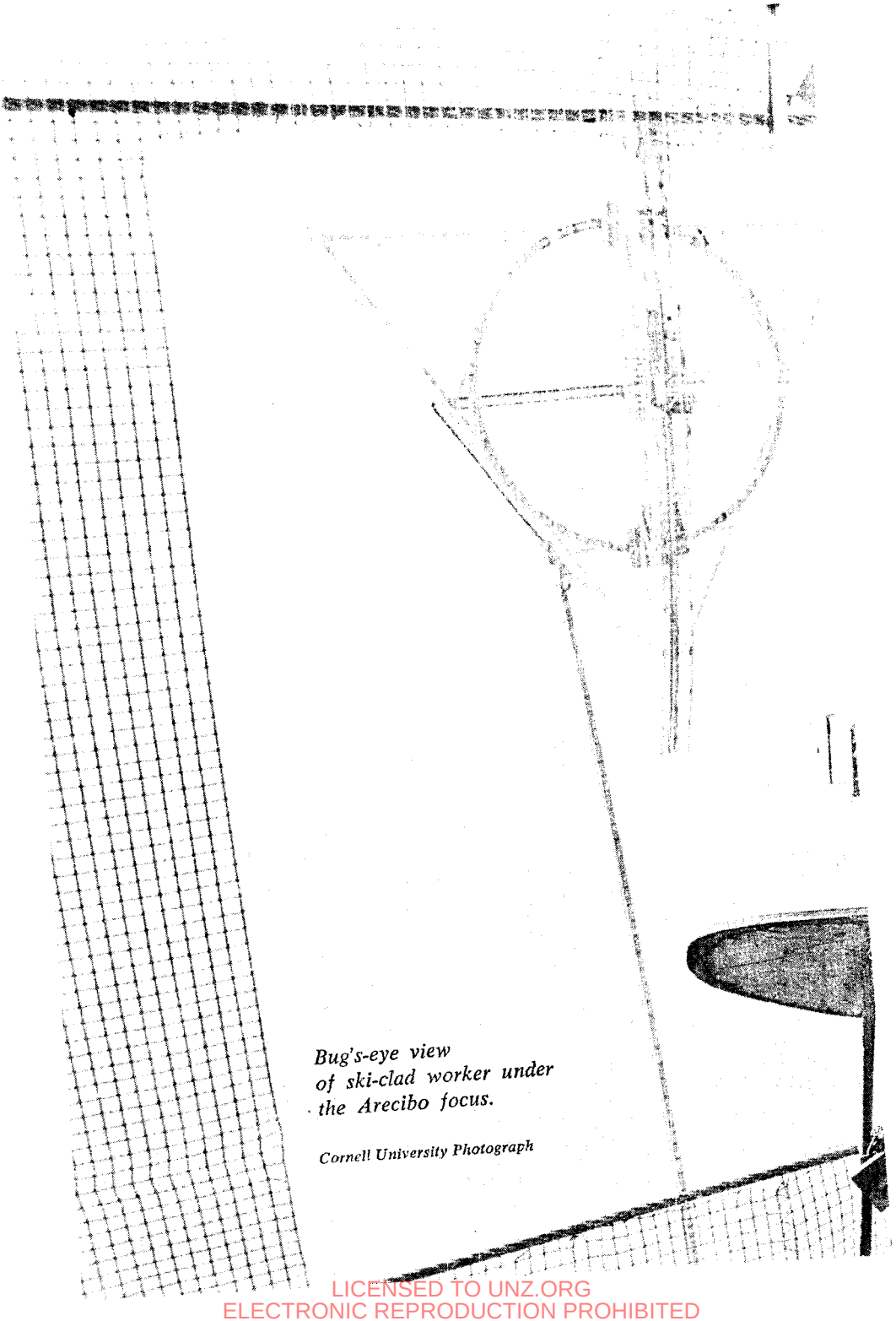

Bug's-eye view of ski-clad worker under the Arecibo focus.

Cornell University Photograph

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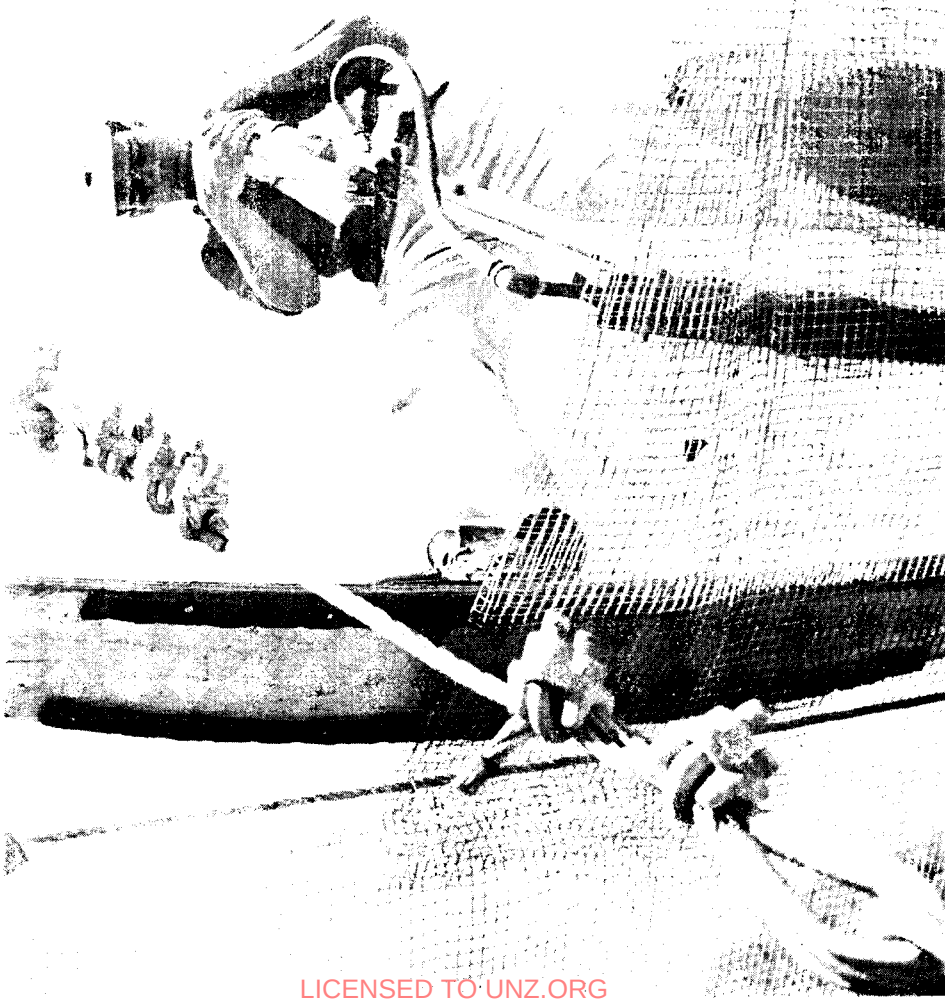
THEY'RE TRYING TO TELL US SOMETHING



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Part 2

Scarcely a year has passed since the British discovery of pulsars stunned the astronomical world, so it's not too surprising that they remain a mystery. It's not even particularly startling that no one can state for sure whether they are artificial radio transmitters manned by little green men, or just some kind of natural object that happens to emit radio pulses about once a second with an accuracy that would turn a watchmaker green with envy. The only thing certain about pulsars is that they'll keep causing astronomers to lose their sleep for some time to come.

It doesn't take much to make a scientist happy, at least for a while. Give him a brand-new phenomenon to observe and he's ecstatic. He's Galileo turning his telescope onto the skies for the first time. He's more turned-on by that simple event than a freaked-out hippie. The British were happier than anyone else, because the fact that one of the greatest discoveries of the century had occurred in their country proved that their Brain Drain wasn't complete.

The amount of information we've been able to deduce about pulsars is remarkable—especially considering that we can't even see them. The fact that the pulses turn on and then off within a fraction of a second tells us that pulsars are no larger than the Earth. The fact, that the short-wavelength components of any given pulse arrive at Earth before the long-wavelength components, allows us to calculate that pulsars are only a few hundred light-years away, which in turn enables us to deduce that they're radiating a billion times the electrical power output of our entire civilization, although this is only a thousandth of a percent of the energy emitted by our Sun.

These are the facts—or, rather, deductions—which any theory of pulsars must be consistent with. There is now considerable doubt about whether these "facts" are indeed correct. Pulsars may be far

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Concluding part.

Whether pulsars are Little Green Men trying to say "Hello, Earth" or quite inanimate masses just throwing off energy, how they manage it is a grade A mystery of science!

THOMAS R. McDONOUGH

more distant than we think, in which case they also must be more powerful, but that's a story we'll get to later.

The most exciting theory of pulsars was also the first one that was proposed: the "Little-Green-Men" theory, known in the trade as the "LGM" theory. Lots of people came up with arguments purporting to prove that no self-respecting little green man would ever send signals like the pulsars', but these anti-LGM arguments are not convincing.

Some people claimed that one pulsar was hard enough to swallow as the abode of little green men, but the four the British had discovered was just too much. This argument can't really be upheld since the only thing we know for certain about the statistics of the distribution of life in our galaxy is that there exists at least one star with allegedly intelligent life on one of its planets. (Most of the readers of this article are residents of that planet.) Aside from the possibility of four different alien neighbors, one of them could have colonized the others. (Yes, Virginia, there really are ways to travel between the stars, despite what you may have heard. Like everything else that's worthwhile in life, it's difficult, time-consuming, and expensive, but it could be done.)

The LGM theory of pulsars must compete with any theory that claims pulsars are natural objects. What then is the competition?

As soon as pulsars arrived on the scene, everybody dreamed up every theory they could, but most of them were quickly shot down by the new facts the radio astronomers kept uncovering. "About once a day," says Cornell's Frank Drake, "one of these theories shows up in the mail. It's been suggested that we set up a system whereby anyone presenting a theory has to pay a fee of ten dollars for the honor of so doing, and when, in the end, we find out which theory is correct, half the money goes to the bright person who suggested it, and we keep the rest to run the observatory."

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When the dust had settled, three main non-LGM theories survived. The first was proposed in the same historic paper in which the British announced their discovery of the pulsars. They speculated that the signals might result from pulsations of fantastically compressed forms of matter known as white dwarf and neutron stars. (The NAACP needn't get upset. There are other astronomical objects sometimes called *black* dwarfs. Mao Tse-Tung will be pleased to learn that there are even ones called *red* dwarfs.) White dwarfs are like nothing Snow White ever gamboled with. They're stars which have about the same amount of matter as in our Sun, but they've evolved to the point where they've collapsed into a volume the size of the Earth, so that a piece of white dwarf the size of a flea would weigh about a ton. A neutron star is what may be left after a star explodes. It's so dense that it makes a white dwarf look as substantial as a Ping-Pong ball—the same amount of matter is crushed into a volume only a few miles in diameter. A neutron-star flea would weigh a hefty million tons.

White dwarfs have actually been observed by telescopes, but neutron stars remain the figment of a theoretician's nightmare—unless pulsars turn out to be such monstrosities. The idea, then, was to imagine you had such a star that was pulsating like a heart. What makes life difficult for the pulsating-star advocates is that white dwarfs should have pulsation periods in excess of two seconds, whereas neutron stars should pulse more rapidly than even the fastest pulsar—which perversely puts the pulsars right in the one place where both kinds *can't* oscillate. However, many people are busily trying to retouch the neutron star and white dwarf theories to account for pulsars, and they may yet succeed.

How do you go about dreaming up a pulsar theory? You consider every conceivable kind of astronomical object, and try to figure out a way to get a rhythm of about one beat per second out of it. One thing that might do it is a binary star system, because if two stars are close enough, they'll whip around each other every second or so. The only kind of stars that fill the bill, though, are our old hypothetical oddballs, the neutron stars. Other stars are too big—they can't get close enough to do the job. The neutron stars would have a strong magnetic field between them that would accelerate charged particles ejected from the stars, creating the radiation we detect. Unfortunately, this theory has the rather embarrassing feature that the system should rapidly collapse.

What bugs the binary boys is that Einstein's General Theory of Relativity predicts that binary stars

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ought to radiate gravitational waves the way moving electrons emit electromagnetic waves such as light and radio waves. These gravitational waves would carry away the energy of the stars, and the neutron-star binary would collapse in a few years, so the pulses could never remain as fantastically constant as we find them to be.

You see, anyone else would have been satisfied with just one literally earth-shaking theory—but not Einstein. After devising his Special Theory of Relativity, he sat down and came up with a General Theory. (You might pause and contemplate the fact that it was the *Special* Theory that led to $E = mc^2$ and its eye-catching demonstration, the atomic bomb. You can't help wondering what additional surprises may lurk concealed in the misty maze of metrics and tensors and the space-time continuum of the General Theory . . .)

Einstein's Special Relativity Theory has been thoroughly verified in the lab, but not so his General Theory. The trouble with the latter is that it's mainly concerned with gravity, and Newton was so moved by his apple that he threw together a theory of gravity that's awfully good despite its simplicity. The General Theory of Relativity predicts results only slightly different from Newton's, so slight that they're diabolically hard to measure.

The main hope of the binary-star pulsar advocates lies with the minority school of thought which claims that General Relativity does *not* require gravitational waves to be emitted from a binary star. There are even reputable scientists who think General Relativity may not even be correct. By a curious coincidence, some of the dissenters just happen to have theories of their own waiting in the sidelines should Einstein's fail. On such formidable foundations are the efforts of scientific progress forged.

The best theory around at the moment is probably Professor Thomas Gold's. On first hearing Gold's precise, flawless British speech, you're certain he must hail from Oxford. Actually, it was Cambridge, and if you listen carefully, you may even detect the faint accent of his native Vienna. He never bothered to pick up a scientist's union card, the PhD, even though a professor of science without a PhD is as rare as a campus without a riot. He apparently wasn't hindered by this: He's a member of the U.S. Academy of Sciences and a Fellow of the Royal Society; he's head of both Cornell's Astronomy Department and of the Cornell Center for Radiophysics and Space Research; he's on NASA's Lunar and Planetary Missions Board; and he's a member of the Space Science Panel of the President's Science

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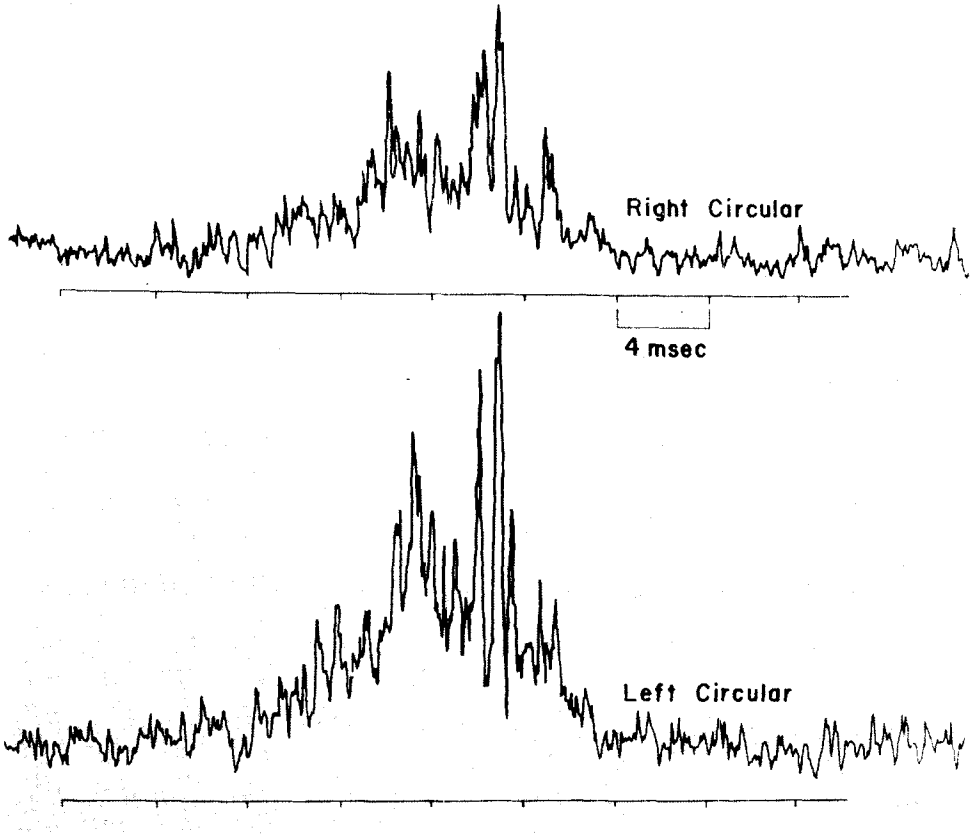

Simultaneous recordings of a pulse from CP0950, observed with two polarizations.

Advisory Committee. He's also somehow found time to devise some of the major theories of the Earth's magnetic field, of the lunar surface, of cosmology, and now, of pulsars. He's a busy man.

What else can you do to a neutron star to make it into a pulsar other than vibrate it or revolve two of them around one another? You can spin it. A neutron star should be spinning very fast if it formed from a rotating star, and Gold thinks it's reasonable to expect some neutron stars to be spinning at about one revolution per second. He offered this spinning-star pulsar model as the reason the pulse rate's so remarkably constant—it's awfully hard to change the speed of a massive flywheel like the Earth or a star. The problem was then to explain why such a spinning star should radiate.

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He proposed that the neutron star might eject a plasma of charged particles much as our Sun does. The neutron star would have an extremely intense magnetic field "frozen" into it, extending well into space as does our Earth's, which would whip the particles up to almost the speed of light, where they'd radiate. As the pulsar rotated, its radio signals would sweep the heavens like the beam from a cosmic lighthouse beacon. The main problem with the theory is explaining why the pulses have such a well-defined shape. It's difficult to fully understand this if the Gold theory is right.

Suppose an alien civilization found a neutron star nearby doing nothing more conspicuous than spinning once a second. Mightn't they try to convert the star into a Gold-style radio transmitter? "Yes, that's a very nice idea," says Gold. "Blow up little atomic bombs, and as they blow up, they supply plasma for a brief moment, get accelerated, and radiate. With a neutron star sitting right next to us, I'm sure I'd propose that we should do that."

Still he's very skeptical about the LGM theory. "If somebody puts out that amount of energy," he says, "I cannot conceive that he would be so blasé about contacting new civilizations that he would not give us a clue in that transmission."

Of course, they might be interested only in communicating with other supercivilizations. Professor Gold is still insistent: "Suppose I'm doing that. Suppose somebody here has given me the job to put out some *huge* amounts of radio energy which I know would go to millions of other stars in a detectable way. Then surely I would be so tempted to put in—if I was allowed to do so—some kind of clue that this is not a natural, but an artificial, signal. And it would have been so easy to include such a thing.

"Either these boys just absolutely don't care a damn—and that I find very hard to believe . . ." He suddenly returns to us earthlings: "I mean, we're interested in the *ants!*" But how many humans are really interested in entomology? How many even care about their fellow earthlings, the Australian aborigines? The few who do are mostly Australian aborigines.

None of the major pulsar theories—least of all the LGM one—have been conclusively proved or disproved. The only thing really certain about pulsar research is that it's not standing still. The structure of the pulses was examined carefully, and they found that the pulses often really consist of two or three distinct pulses in quick succession. Looking for more detail, they found that even these sub-pulses can be resolved into still finer sub-sub-pulses less than a

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thousandth of a second apart—all of which could be used to transmit information, if the pulses are artificial.

Several months after the existence of pulsars was proclaimed, a group announced that they'd found *visual* fluctuations emanating from the first pulsar. Arizona's Kitt Peak National Observatory claimed their data showed the light oscillates at just half the rate of the radio pulses: *tick, tick*flash, *tick, tick*flash, *tick* . . . You could almost hear the international groans that greeted this announcement, for visual fluctuations at *half* the radio rate would really play havoc with existing theories. It's hard enough explaining pulsar signals as it is. If your theory not only has to predict a brightening of the pulsar at the same time as a radio pulse, but has also to *avoid* producing such a brightening on the next pulse, you've got problems.

Other people have searched for such visual pulsations. Most haven't found any, even with apparently better instruments than the Kitt Peak boys had. The one exception was Berkeley's David Cudaback who, on learning of the Kitt Peak results, analyzed Lick Observatory's data. The Lick results seemed to confirm the existence of visual pulsations, but problems such as fluctuations in the speed of a tape recorder account for at least some of the effect, and the results were uncertain. Most scientists remain very skeptical about these reports of visual pulsations.

The months following the announcement of the discovery of the first four pulsars passed without so much as one more pulsar being found. People were beginning to wonder why no more of these strong, distinctive radio emitters had been detected. If pulsars are distributed with any kind of reasonable uniformity, the sky should be cluttered with them. Where were they?

They were all over the place. When astronomers could at last talk their colleagues into turning their radiotelescopes away from the locations of the known pulsars —a pulsar in the hand is worth two in the bush—they didn't find any—at first. Then it happened. Towards the end of the summer, just about one year after the British saw the first pulsar signals, pulsar discoveries came fast and furious. Harvard researchers at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Green Bank, West Virginia, found a fifth pulsar. Its ticks were about three-quarters of a second apart, and it was located at roughly the same distance as the first pulsar. Almost simultaneously, two more pulsars were found by Britishers who used the same antenna the Hewish group had used. This new group searched the sky north of Hewish's survey, and

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found a pair of pulsars that looked pretty much like the previous ones. Another pair—the first southerners—was found by Australians. These provided indications that the pulsars have lots of surprises in store for us before they become as thoroughly pigeonholed as stars or bugs: One of them was the slowest yet—a two-second job—and the other was almost three times as distant as any previous pulsar, yet its broadcasts are received here loud and clear. Then, at last, Cornell's giant telescope in Arecibo, Puerto Rico, joined the crowd by discovering the tenth and eleventh pulsars.

By now, everybody that could beg, borrow, or "liberate" any kind of astronomical instrument must have been aiming at the pulsars, and the show was temporarily stolen from the radio and optical astronomers by the new breed of gamma-ray astronomers. Researchers in Ireland discovered that one of Hewish's original four pulsars appears to be emitting lots of gamma rays. In fact, a rough preliminary calculation indicated that this pulsar was emitting as much energy in gamma rays as the Sun emits in light rays. Perhaps we should be grateful that pulsars aren't too close. If we had such a pulsar as a next-door neighbor, it would be easier to study it, but we wouldn't be here to do the job—we'd all be fried by gamma rays.

Then came the twelfth pulsar. Whatever slight danger may have existed that the pulsar story might evolve into a monotonous task of cataloging virtually identical pulsars evaporated with the twelfth. This one, another Australian, has pulses that occur an incredibly short .089 seconds apart—a godsend for the neutron-star advocates for whom the previous pulsars seemed too slow. As if that weren't enough, the astronomers found that this one is located right in the middle of a supernova remnant, which is just where a neutron star ought to be! This is even fine for the LGM theory, since, as suggested before, a neutron star could make a dandy radio transmitter.

Any confidence we may have felt in the progress of our understanding of pulsars was shattered by Jodrell Bank, who, incidentally, also discovered the thirteenth pulsar. (More proof that the Brain Drain hasn't been fatal to British astronomy.) It happens that our galaxy is full of hydrogen gas that emits radio waves with a wavelength of twenty-one centimeters. Radio astronomers have mapped this radiation, and they find that it's distributed within the spiral arms of our galaxy. This gas will absorb part of any twenty-one centimeter radio wave that happens to pass through it, so the Jodrell Bankers turned their radio telescope onto a pulsar that happens

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to lie right in the Milky Way. What they found was enough to bring tears to the eyes of even a hardened astrophysicist: The pulsar radiation is absorbed by one of the spiral arms of our galaxy that is known to be about fourteen *thousand* light-years away! Conclusion: This pulsar, which we'd been assured was no more than six hundred light-years away, is *at least* fourteen thousand light-years distant, which means that someone goofed. At this writing, it looks like the Jodrell men may be correct, and that the previous distances given for *all* pulsars may be too small by an order of magnitude or two. In what must surely be a classic of understatement, even for the British, the Jodrell Bankers described their pulsar measurement by saying, "The object seems to be unexpectedly far away!"

America got back into the act with the discovery of what may turn out to be the most useful pulsar of them all. The National Radio Astronomy Observatory discovered indications of a pulsar in the Crab Nebula, and Arecibo then confirmed that it was, indeed, not only a pulsar but the fastest one yet, a .033 second job. What really makes this find great is that we know lots about the Crab, since it is the remains of a supernova explosion that the Chinese observed on July 4, 1054 A.D., and has been intensively studied by astronomers. This pulsar really had Cornellians chewing their fingernails, since Cornell is the home of both the Gold rotating-neutron-star theory and of Arecibo, and the theory predicted that this star should start to slow down noticeably within a few days. If it didn't slow down soon, the theory was in big trouble, but in a few days, the Crab pulsar became the first one to demonstrate a measurable change in its pulsing rate—just as Gold's theory predicted!

The Crab pulsar was also the cause of some sadness, because a year or so before the discovery of pulsars, researchers at a major radio telescope had planned to survey the Crab with some fast-response receiving equipment. To their eternal sorrow, they canceled the project—and thereby forfeited their chance to become the discoverers of one of the biggest astronomical bombshells of all time: pulsars!

Surprisingly, you don't need a megabuck antenna like the giant dishes of Jodrell Bank and Arecibo to receive pulsar signals. It's not by any means a trivial task to devise an inexpensive pulsar receiver, but all around the world there are, no doubt, many people doing their best to get into the pulsar game with limited resources. A few miles from Cornell, for instance, Professor Cyril Hazard, the co-discoverer of another enigma of astronomy,

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LATEST (Nov. 26, 1968) PULSAR DATA

Number	*Period* (sec)	*Right Ascension* h m s	*Declination* ° ′	*Distance* (l.y.)
PSR 1929+10	.227	19 29 52	10 53	260
MP0835	.765	8 35 34	—40	3900
MP1426	.788	14 26 35	—66	2000
MP1451	.248	14 51 33	—68	?
MP0736	.375	7 36 51	—40	3300
MP1727	.835	17 27 50	—50	4600
NP0532*	.033089	5 32	22 30	1800

(M=Molonglo; N=NRAO)

**Pulsar suspected to belong to Crab Nebula, which is about 6000 light-years distant.*

the quasars, wasted no time building an antenna specially designed to receive the pulsars. A man accustomed to using the best radio telescopes, he nevertheless constructed an antenna which has about one-thirtieth the effective area of Arecibo's superdish, yet which cost less than five hundred dollars.

Such a bargain-basement antenna can't do a lot of things that Arecibo can, but one thing it can do nicely is survey the sky for pulsars. The receiver's output must be analyzed on a computer, using an ingenious program that should enable the setup to detect far weaker pulsars than an antenna of that size would normally be able to. This just goes to show what one man with a few grad students and a little wire can do in their spare time when properly motivated. (I can honestly say "we" built it because I personally helped construct it. The fact that my participation consisted mainly of bending wire around some home-made insulators —a task well within the capabilities of anyone with a nonzero I.Q.—is better left unmentioned.)

People aren't just trying to figure out what—or who—makes pulsars tick. Many are now busy devising ways to use them to their own advantage. Here we are, presented on a platter with a God-given clock of phenomenal accuracy, available free for the taking. Such precise signals are undoubtedly great for synchronizing experiments that are thousands of miles apart—such as sometimes occur in radio astronomy, for instance—since conventional timing methods incur substantial errors over long distances. Several ways which use the signals to test the General Theory of Relativity have been suggested. Pulsars may prove useful for practical space navigation: measuring the slight changes in pulse rate that

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occur as the spaceship approaches or recedes from a given pulsar should allow calculation of its course.

Of course, the most intriguing aftermath of pulsar signals would be their decipherment—if, after all is said and done, they turn out to be correspondence-school lessons from little green schoolmarms. Once upon a time, people speculated that the first messages Man received from the stars would be in the form of simple codes designed to convey such astounding information as $1 + 1 = 2$ or the value of pi. Then they began to fancy things up with symbolic logic and whatnot. However, Confucius say, "one picture worth thousand equations," and it looks as if the easiest way to communicate with an alien is on TV. Frank Drake once even went so far as to send to some of his colleagues messages which might be received from aliens, and many of them succeeded in decoding such messages into crude pictures of atoms, the Solar System, humanoid creatures, and such.

Such pictures may be what we're getting from the pulsars, but no one's decoded them yet. We don't know whether they'd be three-dimensional pictures or just flat ones; whether they'd be color or black-and-white; whether they'd show as much detail as our TV pictures do, or more, or less; whether the pictures scan linearly, or spirally, or whatever; and we don't even know how each dot in the picture might have been encoded in the pulsar pulse. Each channel of the pulsar broadcast could contain an independent picture, or they might transmit just one picture each second, with each of the thousand channels broadcasting a single dot for the picture. Or maybe they're just radio broadcasts after all.

"Surely the nature of the signals is clear," wrote Queens College (New York) physicist Banesh Hoffmann in a letter to the New York *Times*. He noted that, at some wavelengths, the pulses fade out for about three minutes out of every four:

> A simple extrapolation from what we have already achieved on Earth shows that the radio astronomers have detected an advanced civilization by its television transmission. The quiescent periods, too faint to detect, correspond to the programs, and the precisely spaced pulses to the bunched commercials. The pattern of three minutes of programs followed by a minute devoted to some forty loud commercials shows that the civilization is indeed more advanced than our own. Yet we need not hang our heads in shame: We are clearly not far behind.

Professor Hoffmann notwithstanding, a Herblock cartoon observed that most scientists feel the signals do not include commercials.

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He perceived that this fact alone should prove conclusively that they are from *extremely* advanced civilizations.

Even if pulsars turn out to be but one more class of natural astronomical object, searchers for extraterrestrial life need not despair. Even if the rest of the Solar System should turn out to be barren of any sign of life, we've by no means exhausted our ability to detect such life. Not only have we room by an enormous margin to observe every bit of sky on all radio bands for all possible kinds of intelligent transmissions, but we have only been investigating the cosmic radio noise for a minute part of the age of the universe—and of its inhabitants. We're in the position of a man who's been deaf or almost blind all his life, and who's just been given a hearing aid. We have to feel our way around for quite a while before we've heard all the noises, and can relate them to our rudimentary picture of the universe. If there's one thing the history of astronomy shows us, it's that we've only just begun to uncover the mysteries that abound in the heavens.

There are more things in heaven and on earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your observatory. Pulsars are only the latest in the seemingly unending procession of secrets of the universe laid bare in recent years—any one of which could have been the key to the locations of intelligent civilizations. The successful key might not even lie with radio astronomy. For all we know, super-civilizations may broadcast some other kind of signals than radio waves.

Every time we've suddenly become able to observe a new type of celestial emission, we've found the cosmos to be more intricate than we'd ever dreamed. Galileo enlarged the visible universe with his telescope and saw some of the moons of Jupiter and dark spots on the Sun. Cosmic-ray studies have shown the universe to be a shooting gallery of fast-flying electrons, protons, atomic nuclei, and other assorted odds and ends. The new field of X-ray astronomy has yielded still more surprises. Radio telescopes revealed the existence of quasars, OH regions, exploding galaxies, and lots more. Now pulsars can be added to the list. Even gravity waves may now have been detected. Yet there still remain vast virginal territories of celestial waves and particles difficult or impossible to observe with present equipment—as long as we're tied to the Earth.

It would certainly be great luck if, in the few measly years we've devoted to radio and the other astronomies, we'd already discovered the alien civilizations which a great many—probably a majority—of scientists suspect exist out there. It would be great if true, but we mustn't jump to hasty conclu-

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sions. The only really decisive proof that pulsar signals are artificial transmissions from little green men would be their decipherment into unquestionably intelligent messages. Until then, even the most enthusiastic advocates of Green Power must remain skeptical, as even a cursory examination of our history suggests.

Throughout much of our past, man relied upon the supernatural to explain things he didn't understand: lightning, rain, life, death. Today, we have a new explanation for anything that doesn't seem to conform with the known laws of nature: alien beings. With the support given by serious scientific arguments in favor of the probability of extraterrestrial life, it's all too easy to ascribe any unusual phenomenon to little green men, and the history of astronomy is littered with such suppositions: Martian canals, the Martian moons, flying saucers, quasars, OH regions, and now, pulsars. All of these have been candidates for the LGM theory, but most, if not all, probably have perfectly natural explanations. In an LGM theory, it's always possible to explain away any difficulties by appealing to Arthur C. Clarke's Third Law: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic." What is perhaps most remarkable about the LGM theory of pulsars, however, is that it accounts so well for them *without* invoking Clark's Third Law.

John Ziman, in the preface to his text, "Principles of the Theory of Solids," presents an astute observation on the course of modern science that may well be applicable to pulsars:

> Today's discovery will be tomorrow part of the mental furniture of every research worker. By the end of next week it will be in every course of graduate lectures. Within the month there will be a clamor to have it in the undergraduate curriculum. Next year, I do believe, it will seem so commonplace that it may be assumed to be known by every schoolboy.

Maybe this will be the course of pulsar history. Maybe the LGM theory will become the Edsel of the pulsar business. Bear in mind, though, that even with all our huge telescopes and complex computers, even with all the brilliant minds at work on the problems, even with centuries of human science under our belt, we still don't really understand half the stuff we've found, let alone the stuff we haven't yet discovered. We don't even know for sure whether pulsars are white dwarfs—or little green men.

Perhaps one day, someone will flash deciphered interstellar signals onto our TV screens, and we'll watch the alien equivalent of a Huntley-Brinkley newscast—or of "The Beverly Hillbillies." The mind boggles. . . . ■

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cultural interference

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Sometimes the only thing you need to achieve a breakthrough discovery is to know *it can be done!*

WALTER L. KLEINE

Illustrated by Leo Summers

"Watch this," said Brantak with the calm, smirking assurance of one who has Been There and Knows How to Handle It.

He let his father's jumper float past the Quarantine Station and on around the night side of the big mottled blue and white and blue-green world until the planet's bulk blocked the station's view of him.

Gratta was getting nervous. They all did on the first trip. He smiled relaxed reassurance.

He checked the charge in the storage banks and the condition of the accelerator. Conversion of an ordinary jumper into a hot-diver was a simple matter of bypassing the safety regulator to allow the accelerator to draw greater power. Two clamp wires from the jumper's emergency kit did the job in an instant. You just had to be sure everything was working perfectly, or you might blow the accelerator, or drain the banks. The drive checked out.

He looked for lurking Surveillance Patrol craft. The screens showed nothing.

He connected the bypassing clamp wires, made a last check of the screens and poured on all the power the drive could take. The accelerator screamed. He hurled the craft down through the atmosphere.

Gratta grabbed the armrest and felt her heart leap. Her mother had told her never go out with hot-divers. She should have listened . . . *she should have listened!* But it was a thrill to ride with Brantak and feel all that power pulsing around her—and she was about to see the surface of a quarantined planet with her own eyes. Anyway Brantak had been here before. He knew what he was doing. She tried to ignore her terror and enjoy the thrill, but she could not help asking: "How . . .how do you fool the Surveillors?"

Brantak took his eyes off the control panel with practiced bravado. "Simple, Grat." He put an arm around her. "They don't know

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I'm hot. My father doesn't even know it. We were hardly moving when we went behind the planet. Normal sightseeing speed. They won't expect us back in view for another half hour at least. Look over there!" he pointed out the port.

She looked and saw a primitive flying machine streaking across the starlit sky.

A real primitive flying machine.

Real.

Not an Anthro-museum model; not a tri-vid picture.

Real.

She forgot her terror. She was seeing things she would never see any other way; might never see again.

She said: "What makes it go?"

"See those things hanging from the things that stick out from the side of it?"

"Yes . . ."

"Well," said Brantak, making the most of this chance to impress her with his knowledge, "they suck air in the front and blow it out the back. It's a terribly complicated mechanism—like anything primitive."

"Ohhhh," said Gratta.

Suddenly, in his bones, Brantak *felt* something happen. He looked quickly back at the control panel.

The power level meter was pegged.

Pegged!

Pegged so hard the needle seemed to bend.

Brantak cut power and fought screaming terror. This couldn't happen. *Couldn't!*

Power vanished. The jumper dropped like a stone. The needle stayed on the peg. In a few seconds the drive would blow, and if the drive blew . . .

He didn't want to think about it.

Down on a world of primitives? Savages?

Gratta said with knowledgeless calm: "What's wrong?"

He mustered his remaining bravado and said: "Oh, nothing. The power-level meter is acting up. It does that sometimes. Doesn't really matter, but I don't like to make a jump without knowing my power. I'm going to land and fix it. Give you a chance to see the surface close up."

"Oh," she said. She knew he was lying, but didn't know what to say.

The needle *was* bending.

The surface rushed up. There were lights. There was a dark area near the horizon. Brantak took a chance and fed the drive enough power to jump into the dark.

The jumper came down through dense trees, crashing and splintering its way to the ground.

"Ohhhh," said Gratta. "Look, Brantak! Trees! Real trees!"

"Look for him now. He just occluded. He's at—" the voice of Senior District Surveillor Zonnik read off the position coordinates of the suspected hot-diver.

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Special Surveillor Frannik, his jumper drifting, shielded, in the twilight zone a hundred miles up, made a few corrections and picked up the jumper in his magnifying screens. Nothing unusual yet . . . Abruptly the suspect craft flipped down toward the forbidden surface.

Frannik sighed softly in amazement. He had never seen one drop so fast. He poured on power and set off in pursuit. There was doubt he could catch up. His jumper had been specially modified for this task, but it had ultimate safeties to prevent self-destruction. A hot-diver, with simple jumper-wires, might go faster—but at what risk. Frannik could not stop the idiot from goggling at the primitives, but, with skill, might trap him when he came back up.

He swore softly and prepared to intercept. Those fool kids! They had not the vaguest conception of the meaning of cultural interference; not even the beginning of an idea of the effect even the slightest trace of contact with a superior civilization could have on a bunch of electromechanical-age primitives like those below. Merely learning that a ship like a jumper existed was often enough. The changes wrought by such knowledge could alter the fabric of an entire culture; destroy the necessary even and logical progression in the discovery and development of ideas.

The hot-diver kept dropping. Abruptly, Frannik changed course and dove after him. The fool was practically on the surface! Was he going to land? Actually land? Frannik never felt so powerless; never felt his jumper so inadequate for the task.

The hot-diver was almost down; already he was into the area of local air travel. He was heading for a lighted area! If they saw him . . .

Frannik wasn't close enough; wasn't close enough . . .

The hot-diver suddenly jumped sidewise into a dark area and was down.

Down! On the surface! Frannik's stomach knotted. He followed, knowing it was too late; his ship wasn't fast enough.

Something smelled.

He sniffed absently; couldn't place the odor. It got stronger.

He took his eyes off the screens and looked at the instruments.

The power-level meter needle was against the peg and bending.

Bending!

As he watched the needle bowed farther, popped off its pivot and dropped to the bottom of the dial.

He cut power to nothing.

The jumper dropped like a rock. Lights came up fast.

He took a desperate chance and fed in enough power for a gentle jump to the dark area.

The odor became stronger; choking.

Power failed.

The jumper smashed down through trees.

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Dr Milton Wessenberger hit the small button shutting down the accelerator. He turned to face the dignitaries assembled to watch their investment perform. They knew nothing of the experiment; they thought only in terms of dollars and of "it works" or "it doesn't work."

"Gentlemen," he said with as casual a smile as he could muster, "we are having a problem with the power supply. I won't bother you with technicalities, but it's minor and we should be able to sort it out by tomorrow. We could proceed with minimal risk, but in this business, with this kind of an investment, we don't take risks."

Dr Harold Hornby, President of the University, said: "Milt, are you *sure* it's minor?"

Wessenberger said: "Reasonably. As sure as one can be in research." He was a scientist, not a politician, but he'd learned enough from bitter experience to know better than to let a challenge pass or try answering it directly.

Hornby didn't press the point. He said: "Well, gentlemen, we'll try again tomorrow. Let us go enjoy the refreshments." He expertly shepherded them from the control room.

Hornby was a politician; an educator by accident only and a scientist to no greater extent than having passed college chemistry. There were times Wessenberger was glad to have a politician to shield him from the other politicians, but he could have done without the needling question and the carefully inflected threat that the accelerator had damn well better work in the morning.

Doug Moore, his assistant, was staring at him. "Milt, why didn't you tell them—"

"Because when the impossible happens you don't tell a man that it has. He knows it can't be; therefore, you must be lying. Better tell him a lie he'll believe."

"But Milt—it *happened*!"

"I know it happened, Douglas; you know it happened—but *they* know it couldn't. What matters with politicians isn't what is, but what they *think* is. Now please tell me: who among those fatted cats is going to believe that the instant we reach operating charge all that neatly stored power should vanish? *Pfffttt!* Into nowhere? And who, tell me, is going to believe we should keep drawing power into our little monster and that it should just vanish somewhere between input and the capacitor charge metering circuit—with no abnormal readouts or smell of burning insulation?"

Moore said: "So we find nowhere by morning, or else?"

"You have become very perceptive, Douglas," said Wessenberger.

"Josh, go see what your dogs are barking at!"

"The moon," said Joshua Bain,

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without removing his feet from the frayed footstool. That woman, always finding some reason why a poor man couldn't sit down and rest his bones.

His wife crossed the room and stood over him. "Joshua Bain," she said, "it's cloudy!"

"It is?"

"And there's *something* in the swamp."

"There is?" He was waking up, now.

"Look!" She pointed.

He looked. And listened. There was a glow in the swamp and the dogs were fear-barking.

He felt the hair rise on the back of his neck. There *was* something out there.

Those queer-brains at the University?

He didn't know.

But you couldn't trust those people; always trying to change things.

He took his shotgun down from the mantle, put on his hunting jacket and filled the pockets with shells.

"I'm going after it, Sarah," he said. "Call the sheriff if I'm not back in half an hour."

"Forty-three," said the radio.

"Forty-three; go ahead," said Deputy Sheriff Herman Mundy.

"7123 Partridge Road; lady says there's something in the swamp. Dogs barked. Her husband went out to look and didn't come back. She's worried. Check it out."

"Forty-three clear," said Mundy. He looked down at the girl seated on his lap. "Sorry, honey," he said, "but we knew there would be nights like this."

She gave him a big, lazy smile and put her arms around his neck. She kissed him long and hard, then pried herself loose from his arms.

He took a last slug from the bottle and handed it to her. She took it, walked around to the driver's side, leaned in and kissed him again. "Tomorrow night?"

He nodded and she walked away.

Mundy waited until her car was gone, then started the cruiser and drove carefully out of the clearing, lights off. It had been a favored lover's lane until he, in the name of morality and the Sheriff's Department, began making nightly visits to clean it up.

He found one car full of kids who hadn't gotten the word. He lectured them, ordered them out and followed them to the highway. Then he turned on the red light and made full use of the power under the hood of the 428 Ford.

He began to wish he hadn't taken the last slug. The road was just the least bit hazy. He pulled a thermos of coffee from beneath the seat, fumbled it open and drank as much as he could stomach. It wasn't much. He followed it with a handful of mints. He had to kill the alcohol on his breath.

He passed the crest of the ridge; started down toward the swamp.

Then he saw it.

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A glow, way out in the middle of the swamp. A funny glow; a glow that gave him a stomach-tightening feeling he ought to turn around and run.

He picked up the mike; hesitated. It would sound awfully funny on the air . . . and if that lady smelled his breath—

He couldn't afford to lose his job. He put the mike back on the hook.

But if that glow was what he thought it was—

He would tell them . . . tell them he couldn't think what he would tell them.

That it was nothing; he would tell them it was nothing. He would calm the lady's fears and go take a closer look.

But not too close.

Frannik ran.

Behind him, his ship destroyed itself with a great pale yellow glow.

Frannik had been through Emergency Abandonment procedures hundreds of times in simulation.

Those hundreds of times did nothing to prepare him for the real thing.

Performing the required physical actions was simplicity itself. Merely remove all clothing and any artifact which might betray him as an off-planet being, set the auto-destruct mechanism and run. Nothing to it.

Facing the reality, the fear, of being stranded naked on a primitive planet was something else.

Frannik was terrified and could not control it.

He didn't know why his ship crashed.

He didn't know if anyone knew he'd crashed or, if they knew, whether they had any idea *where*.

He could not imagine how any primitive anywhere near here could miss seeing the glow of the ship destroying itself.

He could not imagine the primitives not investigating that glow.

Yet he had to remain close to the ship so that if rescue came he could be found. He had to remain here; probably the most dangerous place he could be on the planet.

He ran a few yards into the forest and found a tree he could climb. With luck the primitives might not look up.

He flattened himself against a branch and trembled.

Brantak said: "Take off your clothes."

"No!" Gratta shrieked and tried to push back through the wall of the cabin. "No! How can you . . . I mean . . . take me home. *Take me home!*"

Brantak slapped her. Hard. "Shut up! Calm down! Get it through your head that we are in trouble. Something happened. I don't know what, yet. Didn't you ever hear of Emergency Abandonment procedure?"

She cowered. "But I don't want to . . . I . . . no—"

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Patiently, Brantak explained: "It is considered important that these primitives do not so much as even suspect we exist. The knowledge is supposed to be harmful to their cultural development. I can't imagine why, but the Old-Heads who make regulations think it would be. The regulations are that any jumper which crashes on a primitive planet will be destroyed immediately and the occupants will remove all clothing, jewelry and anything else which might betray origin."

Gratta backed into a corner and moaned: "No-no-no-I want to go home I want to go home I want to go home—"

He slapped her again. "*Listen* to me, Grat! I don't believe in those regulations! I am *not* going to destroy the jumper! I'm going to fix it. But we have to be ready to destroy the jumper and run if one of the Surveillors finds us. The penalty for not following Emergency Abandonment procedure is much worse than for just sightseeing. Now will you take off your clothes and watch the sky while I fix this thing?"

She nodded numbly and removed her clothing slowly, as if in a trance. She looked out the windows and saw only tree trunks illuminated by the glow of the jumper.

Senior District Surveillor Zonnik moved rapidly. "Hurry, Garfang! We don't know how much time he'll have before he has to start dodging the primitives, and if he does we may never find him—"

Garfang was hurrying.

The disaster had been so abrupt, so total, so without warning that it still seemed unreal. One instant Frannik was pursuing a routine hot-diver, all communication channels open. The next a blast of off-harmonic static and high-level random noise overloaded every surveillance channel and left half of them inoperative. Then a pre-destruction distress-location signal from Frannik's ship. Nothing from the hot-diver.

"Garfang," said Zonnik, "keep your jumper high, well clear of the atmosphere. You and I are all that are left. If I crash, don't come after me. Go to Headquarters and report everything. Let them make a decision. If this planet has developed some strange secret weapon against us—"

Garfang understood the implications of what was happening without having them spelled out. The disaster so far could be a mere pinprick compared to what might follow. Primitives with such a weapon—

He mumbled assent, then almost choking on his fear of the sudden unknown down on that planet: "Zonnik, let me go down. You're more important than I am. You could tell them more if I didn't come back."

Zonnik brushed the idea aside. "You can tell them enough. I have

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a better chance of getting back from down there."

Deputy Sheriff Herman Mundy pulled into the rutted lane at 7123 Partridge Road. A shabby woman was standing on the porch wringing her hands.

He parked the cruiser, got out, put his shoulders back and inflated his chest. He walked up to the porch as impressively as he could.

"What's the trouble, Ma'm?" he asked gruffly.

"Look ... the swamp—" She pointed.

"Swamp glow, Ma'm," he said, exuding confidence. "See it all the time from up on the ridge. Isn't usually this bright down here."

"Young man," she said sharply, "I've lived in this here swamp all my life and I ain't never seen nothing like that. Only time this here swamp glows is when the moon comes up in fog. Ain't no moon; ain't no fog!" She stuck out her chin like a challenged bulldog.

"Ma'm," said Mundy soothingly, "it isn't nothing unusual. Little bright maybe. I've seen it from up on the ridge lots of times with no moon."

"Young man! There is *something* out there! My man Josh went after it with the dogs and his shotgun. Said he'd be back in half an hour. That was more'n an hour ago! He ain't back! Not a sound from out there! Not even a dog! Dogs yapped like crazy when it happened! Something happened to my man! You find him!"

She was near hysteria, and the fact touched some long-buried protective instinct in Mundy, perhaps slightly more exposed by the amount of liquor he'd consumed. "Don't worry Ma'm," he said gently, "whatever's out there, I'll find it. I'll find him for you. Now, tell me about him; where he goes in the swamp—"

Brantak climbed out of the drive access hatch. His face bore an expression of infinite puzzlement. "Grat," he said, as if not really believing it, "there is nothing wrong. Nothing."

"Nothing?" Gratta did not even feel as relieved as she expected. There was something about Brantak which inspired confidence, even when she was stranded naked on a primitive planet. It was a fascinating place, once she overcame her fear. To be really on the surface of a planet that had *real* trees . . . to stand on *real* grass . . . when she got home she would study very hard and maybe she could qualify for the Primitive Planet Survey Service and walk on real grass among real trees again.

"Nothing," said Brantak, "so let us get back in and see if it works."

"All right." Gratta hesitated in the hatch, suddenly reluctant to leave. It was so peaceful here. She turned away from the trees and stepped up off the grass.

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Brantak sat at the controls without dressing. Gratta sat beside him, suddenly aware of the magnificence of his body.

He started the drive; gently fed power to the accelerator.

"Normal!" he said, as if he didn't really believe it.

He raised power to normal operating level, slowly lifted the jumper.

The power-level meter hit the peg.

Dr. Milton Wessenberger yelled: "Cut it, Doug, cut it!"

Before his very eyes he had seen again an almost full power charge vanish into nowhere—after a complete check of the instrumentation revealed nothing wrong anywhere in the circuits.

Doug Moore cut power and the drain stopped.

"Now, Douglas," said Wessenberger, "we will see where it went. I hope." They turned to the prolonged task of checking the readouts of the array of test instruments they had hung on the accelerator's power supply. It would take a few hours, but somewhere along the line there should be an answer.

Should be.

Senior District Surveillor Zonnik froze at the controls.

The power-level meter needle, abruptly and without warning, hit the peg. His drive was overloaded, just as Frannik's had been.

He had to shut down the drive or it would blow.

He couldn't move.

The needle began to bend.

Garfang's voice screamed in his ears: "Zonnik! Help! My drive is pegged! What can I do? Help!"

The scream broke the spell, galvanized him. "Cut it back, you fool!" he yelled, and reached to do the same for his own.

The power-level meter needle returned to normal.

All by itself.

Zonnik stared.

Deputy Sheriff Herman Mundy was becoming sober enough to wonder what he was doing here, slopping through a swamp with a riot gun trying to find some dumb old hillbilly who was probably more drunk than he was.

He consoled himself with the thought that the old guy might have some of his jug left to share with a poor, tired, thirsty sheriff who really wouldn't turn a man in for enjoying himself.

He was getting closer to the nearer, brighter of the two glowing spots. It looked less and less like any swamp glow he'd ever seen.

He paused, loosened his revolver in its holster, slipped off the safety on the shotgun. A man couldn't be too careful—

Then he saw it.

Impossible!

Not here! Maybe out West somewhere, but not here!

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Impossible, but there it was—flattened against a branch, waiting to pounce.

Cougar!

He reacted without thinking; pumped two fast shots out of the riot gun before he remembered he wasn't shooting a rifle; not even normal choke shotgun; didn't have the range.

The cougar dropped off the limb.

Mundy clawed for his .38.

Then he stopped.

There was something very funny about the way that cat fell.

Very funny. Not like a cat at all.

More like a man.

The whatever-it-was didn't move.

Mundy cocked his .38 and advanced carefully. Now, for the first time, he was really scared; really unsure of what he was up against.

He reached the thing and laughed.

The cougar was a naked man.

He didn't even seem hurt.

Mundy relaxed. He lowered the hammer on the .38, put it back in the holster, leaned the riot gun against a tree and reached for his handcuffs.

His feet were jerked from under him. He dropped heavily to the ground and a body landed on top of him.

His head seemed to explode.

Josh Bain sat on his haunches and watched the funny machine settle back to the ground. The hatch opened and the pretty little girl and boy got out again. They weren't wearing anything.

Josh Bain had heard of people seeing things like this. He knew everybody thought they were crazy or had been drinking too much.

He would have to be careful who he let drink out of that new jug. He hadn't really drunk that much of it, but it *did* seem stronger than usual. If it made him see things—

Josh Bain was not a man to question good fortune.

He kept the dogs quiet and enjoyed seeing this thing. His old eyes hadn't seen a sight like that little girl in he couldn't remember how long.

The boy went inside the hatch at the bottom. He was gone for a long time. The pretty little girl walked around, staying close to the machine, looking up often, and looking and looking and looking at everything in sight.

The boy came out and said something to the girl, but she didn't seem to hear. He repeated it, louder. Funny sounding language. Foreigners of some kind. She jumped, then walked slowly to the machine and climbed in.

The boy followed her and the hatch closed. There was a pause and then, very slowly at first, the machine lifted off the ground and rose more and more rapidly into the sky until it was invisible.

Josh Bain waited a while to see if it would come back.

It didn't.

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He called his dogs and started home.

He would tell Sarah it wasn't anything and then go have another swig from that new jug.

Igor Botsukov stopped taking pictures as the object vanished among the stars.

He smiled the small smile of satisfaction that comes only very rarely to a spy; the satisfaction in knowing that, quite by accident, he had stumbled on something really of major importance.

He had learned, and put proof on film, that flying saucers were real, and American. It was his good fortune, when two flying saucers landed in the swamp, to be checked into a motel with a view of the swamp; also to be looking out the window when they came down. Also to be in the United States, possibly the only nation in the world where one could carry full equipment for photographic espionage and pass it off as a hobby.

The equipment, quite complete, included several cameras, a variety of films, and 500mm and 1,000mm lenses. Even the latter wasn't quite long enough, but it did the job. He shot roll after roll with that lens. Black and white, color, infra red, even infra-red aero. They would go to Moscow via the Embassy, by way of a blind-drop intermediate address.

With the 500mm he shot one roll of black and white. In the morning he would give it to the local newspaper. It would be interesting to see how the Americans reacted to an excellent set of photographs proving the existence of their most secret weapon—victims of their own vaunted, foolish freedom of the press. Fitting.

Igor Botsukov smiled and smiled as he dismantled his equipment and packed it away in its cases.

Brantak could hardly believe his good fortune. Gratta was hanging on his neck and nuzzling against him and sighing: "Ohhhh, Brantak . . ." and mumbling on and on about joining the Primitive Planet Survey Service.

And no Surveillor had picked him up on the way out.

In fact, as he looked back at the surface during the ascent, there was a small, glowing spot near where his jumper hit.

The poor idiot Surveillor crashed, too, and destroyed his ship!

Poor, stupid idiot! Didn't even take time to check what was wrong!

Nothing was wrong.

It must have been some strange quirk of this planet's electromagnetic field—or something. Maybe if he'd studied harder he would know. One thing sure—he wasn't coming back to *this* planet!

How lucky could one guy be?

Down on the surface of a primitive planet for almost three hours, escape the Surveillors entirely and make it with a girl he had out for

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the first time? Really impossible, wonderful luck . . . but then he always was a guy who knew the score and how to handle things—

"Nothing?" said Doug Moore.

"Nothing," said Dr. Milton Wessenberger. "It went into the capacitors—and vanished. It didn't come out anywhere we had a meter. It was building up a charge, and feeding the accelerator to eighty-three percent power—and it just went away."

"So?" said Moore helplessly.

"Let us go look at the beast," said Wessenberger. "Perhaps we can see where it is going."

"You really think so?"

"No, but it's all we haven't tried."

They left the control room and went down to the accelerator room. It was not a large device, nor relative to many projects, terribly expensive. This was a function of the kinds of energy he wanted to study, but he'd found the only way to sell the project was size and cost—"Any reasonably endowed university could afford one."

The acceleration path was circular, about thirty feet in diameter, held rigid in a spidery steel lattice which also, in the center, supported the capacitor bank. It was anchored to the floor on massive concrete pilings; braced again at the ceiling where the lattice connected to the steel beams imbedded in more concrete.

"Look at this," said Moore. He pointed at the foot of one of the concrete pilings. Several fine cracks radiated away from it.

Wessenberger looked at the cracks. He shook his head. "Wouldn't do it," he said, almost sadly. "Might prevent the thing from working once we got a full charge—if it's settled far enough to pull the path out of true—but it wouldn't dump the charge."

Still, something about the cracks bothered him. He couldn't pin it down, but something was wrong. Because it was obviously not the problem, he put it to the back of his mind and concentrated on the search for a massive energy drain.

He did not have to hunt far.

The capacitors were set in three banks. The center capacitor of the top and bottom banks bolted to the supporting framework directly below and above the massive central support pillars. Both capacitors had dead-shorted into the steel pillars. Paint was burned off and even the concrete was black where the pillars entered.

Wessenberger stared first up, then down, then back again. "Hell of a ground, Douglas," he said.

"Maybe we should have separated them farther from the frame," Doug Moore suggested.

Wessenberger shook his head. "The separation and insulation is already two hundred fifty percent of the requirements—which do not take into account the possibility of

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a capacitor working well within its specified limits suddenly deciding to blow its little brains out. We have spares. Hornby will be glad to O.K. overtime to have a crew put them in."

"And if they blow tomorrow—"

"We are home free. Douglas my boy, could you forget that they were made by Wesley Electronics, who is one of our sponsors? And that Hamilton Wesley will be looking over our shoulders again in the morning? If Mr. Wesley's capacitors blow tomorrow, he gets the buck. Not us. And the same if the foundation has settled enough to put the path out of true. North Point Redi-Mix, which poured it, is another sponsor with president in attendance. Douglas, I think we are home free."

The cracks in the concrete returned from the back of his mind. He paused at the stairs, then before going up to the phone, walked slowly around the accelerator, looking at each concrete piling.

There were cracks at each, in almost identical pattern.

He still was bothered, but couldn't pinpoint what disturbed him. If the foundation was really settling, he would be lucky to get half a dozen runs before the whole thing had to be rebuilt.

He swore silently. That might take some vigorous politicking.

Senior District Surveillor Zonnik looked from Frannik to Garfang to the primitive lying in the information extractor. He carefully suppressed his feeling of ragged-edge desperation and said, quite calmly and evenly: "This primitive knows nothing of us or of any weapon for use against us. Nor could any weapon he knows of be used against us, or be developed to be used against us."

"True," said Frannik, but they *do* have a secret weapon which was used against the hot-diver and myself."

"It even reached me, and I was several hundred miles out," said Garfang.

"I think we should recommend Elimination," said Frannik. "You can't have any idea of the ferocity of this primitive. He shot at me before he was nearly close enough to have any idea who I was."

"And," said Garfang, "a culture which would use a weapon against a ship hundreds of miles out in space and making no move against them must be more vicious than any culture we have yet encountered."

"You are both wrong," said Zonnik. He felt a little better now. He could exercise his personal secrets of Leadership: Always Make a Statement Positive, and Always Have a Different Idea Than Any Suggested by a Subordinate. "This man," he said with firm assurance, "has no idea we exist. There is a strong indication no one on the planet has more than the remotest

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idea of our existence. Check the Computer of Probabilities if you like. The secret weapon, if one exists, must be a remarkably well-kept secret known to very few. This is not impossible in a primitive culture, nor is deadly fear of strangers. The weapon—if there is one—worked only part of the time. It brought down Frannik and the hot-diver but had only brief effect on Garfang and myself. It didn't prevent the hot-diver from leaving, nor did it prevent me from rescuing Frannik and taking this primitive along for testing. If these primitives are as ferocious as you credit them, and if they had an effective secret weapon, they would have used it at all times and certainly would have prevented me from leaving with one of their fellows."

Zonnik paused to let that sink home before making his final point: "And if they are so ferocious and have a weapon, they would have swarmed over you like ants while you were down. You were down long enough for that. I think we have a new natural phenomenon at work. It should be studied by scientists, don't you agree?"

Frannik and Garfang agreed. They had to.

"Now, Frannik," said Zonnik, "if you hurry, you can take this primitive back to where he found you before dawn reaches that spot."

Frannik gulped. He took the primitive and left.

Deputy Sheriff Herman Mundy picked himself up slowly. Every bone in his body ached.

He groaned.

He grabbed at a tree trunk to steady himself. Then realization hit him.

"It's morning!" The echoes of his shout faded into the swamp and he looked frantically at his watch.

6:45!

He was supposed to be off duty at midnight! He'd been here over ten hours!

How was he going to explain this to Sheriff Martin?

The sheriff would be in his office by the time he got back—if he hadn't been out all night looking for a missing car and deputy.

Mundy looked down at himself. He was wet and muddy, his uniform was torn, and his hat was crushed into the mud. He had a hangover like nothing he could remember.

Who would believe *any* story he told?

He *had* to think of *something.*

Garfang, bound for Government Planet with Zonnik's report, kept a wary eye on the power meter as he moved the jumper away from the Surveillance Station.

At the limits of the system he began to relax and prepare for the inter-system jump.

Abruptly the power meter needle hit the peg.

He shut down the drive and drifted.

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Finally the needle dropped back to normal.

He restarted the drive and cautiously fed power back in until a full operating charge was reached. Everything worked.

He decided to ask for a transfer.

Dr. Milton Wessenberger hit the shut-down switch and swore. He turned to face Hornby and the mass of sponsoring company presidents.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we have just experienced a massive power-supply failure. As you all know, the specified overload reserve for the system was fifty percent greater than required for our projected maximum experiments, which in turn would require over a hundred percent of the needs for this first test run. Mr. Wesley, I would like a conference with your engineers and quality-control people as soon as possible. That is only the first problem.

"You all know the specifications for the foundation and support system. There are cracks around every piling in the floor. I haven't looked at the ceiling. Any significant settling will affect the trueness of the acceleration path. It seems on the face of it that this installation may not have been built in accordance with my specifications. If you will come with me, I'll show you." He and Moore headed for the door to the accelerator room.

Their audience followed, led by a sweating Hornby.

Wessenberger pointed up at the blackened ceiling; down at the blackened floor. "There," he said quietly, "and there." He waited for them to take it in, then pointed to the cracks around the piling near him. "And there. Before we try another run I want a conference with the engineers of all the contracting firms involved here. As soon as they can get here and I can get some sleep." He stared Hornby straight in the eye.

Hornby said: "I . . . think . . . that can be arranged."

"Good," said Wessenberger. He looked back at the cracked foundation, swore softly and kicked idly at the crack.

And abruptly he knew what was wrong about those cracks.

The haggard Air Force major, who looked as if he had gone even more than two days without sleep, handed the stack of photographs across the table. "Mr. President," he said, "these are real. There is absolutely no possibility of doubt. They were taken by an excellent amateur photographer, a traveling salesman named Homer Smith. The FBI is trying to locate him for debriefing."

The critically sharp, long-scale black-and-white prints showed a disk-shaped craft with bulges top and bottom.

"Whose is it, Major?"

"We don't know, Mr. President. There were a number of reported

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sightings, some apparently hysterical but mostly real. Radar didn't track it. There were several occurrences of very abnormal, but brief, radar interference. We computed a flight path from the sightings. It went north, which could take it anywhere, including into space. No reports indicate space, however."

A civilian who appeared to have had even less sleep said: "We have no intelligence indicating even a possibility of work on anything remotely resembling this thing, anywhere. The scientific data interpretation people say it has to use a principle outside known science. They point out that given a freak breakthrough to such a principle, the machine could be built by almost any nation, right under our noses. We would never see it because, not knowing of a possibility that it existed, we would not be looking for anything relating to it. We ran a computer check on publication of technical papers and Masters and Doctoral theses relating to nothing imaginably practical. We ranked first and the Russians second."

A general said: "Mr. President, we know it isn't ours. That leaves the Russians the likely source. I think we should attack them before they hit us. With a weapon like that they're bound to use it."

The President said: "*Could* it be from space?"

The major shrugged tiredly. "It could be. It *could* be from anywhere, including any crackpot inventor's back-alley garage. But I don't think so. It looks beyond the capability of a one-man operation and it didn't fit any of the likely patterns of alien behavior the think factories have come up with."

The President said: "Gentlemen. I cannot and will not order an attack on any nation without the most absolute evidence of aggression—which this is not. There is only one thing certain, and so only one thing upon which we can act. It is certain that this craft exists and works. Therefore, it can be built; therefore, we must build one. We will set up a new Manhattan Project, under whatever name you wish, with whatever funds and personnel you require. Funding will be hidden in the CIA budget. Meanwhile CIA and all other Intelligence services will attempt to discover who this one belongs to.

"I would like to see an American flying saucer yesterday!"

The haggard colonel, who looked as if he had gone without much more than the three days of sleep he had missed, handed the stack of color photographs across the table. "Comrade Chairman," he said, "these are real. One of our agents photographed it in the United States."

The superb color prints showed a pale yellow disk-shaped craft with bulges top and bottom.

"Whose, Comrade Colonel?"

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The officer sagged. "Comrade, we don't know. We just don't know. We have nothing; nothing in all our espionage experience or data indicates that anything of this sort exists or is being worked on anywhere in the world."

A civilian, with cold Siberian fear in his eyes and showing the effects of days of living on stimulants said: "We know it was sighted in the United States. That could mean nothing, but it is all we have. Our experts say it could be invisible under our very noses if it used some completely new principle which our data analysis teams were not instructed to look for. It could be the most easily kept secret in history. The United States publishes more scientific papers relating to nothing imaginably practical than any other nation. We are looking for an answer there . . ."

A grim general said: "Comrade Chairman, I don't think we need any more evidence of their intentions toward us. We must attack before they build a fleet of these *things* and overwhelm us!"

The chairman said: "Could it be from space?"

"It *could* be," said the colonel, "but there were no radar sightings and the visual observations did not see it vanish upwards. It seemed to head north at a relatively shallow angle, but very rapidly."

The chairman sank into his chair. He thought for a long time, which seemed even longer to the others in the room. Finally, he said: "We can not attack on an unconfirmed suspicion. And what if we attacked and found they already had a fleet of these things? Possibly even *one* of them would be enough to destroy us. We cannot take such a chance. We know the thing can exist. We must build one. We must increase our espionage and find out who already *has* built one."

Doug Moore said: "Milt, they'll never buy it. After that fiasco we'll be lucky if they agree to rebuild the thing, much less—"

"They'll agree," said Wessenberger. "Douglas, when you have been swimming in a sea of politicians for as long as I, you will have a better appreciation of the varieties of bait which they will accept."

"Perhaps," said Moore, "but I still don't even understand why you want to do it differently. It shou!d work like it is."

"It should, Douglas, but it won't. You'll see."

They walked into the conference room. The hostility of the engineers and construction and production supervisors facing them was a thing which hung in the air like a damp cloud.

Wessenberger ignored it. He took his place at the table smiling, pushed his briefcase to one side and said: "Gentlemen, since calling this meeting I have rechecked a great deal of data and done a great deal

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of thinking. By all calculations, checked and rechecked, the foundation and capacitors of the accelerator should have had ample reserve. I will make copies of my work available to any of you who wish to recheck me. This leaves two possibilities. Either the work done by you people and your companies was faulty, or this machine I have designed is doing something unknown which plans and calculations did not and could not take into account. Such things happen in research, as you all know."

There was a beginning of angry muttering as a few people guessed the direction he was going. He did not give them a chance to interrupt: "None of you will disagree that the capacitors *did* blow or that the foundation and structural support for the acceleration path have, for whatever reason you may care to assign, failed, or that repairing the foundation and structure as they stand would be impractical. We will have to rebuild most of the installation from scratch."

More muttering and a half-shout of "Now wait a minute, Wessenberger!"

"I propose," said Wessenberger, calmly raising his voice, "that since the installation must be rebuilt, we should not repeat past errors, real, imagined or unknown. We should, and we can for no greater expense, build an accelerator which will avoid the problem of foundation failure and also the possibility of capacitor failure because of improper stress caused by failure of the supporting structure for any reason."

He raised his voice again, reaching almost a shout: "We can do it by making the foundation and the structure separate units, with vibration-absorbing material between. The structure would be stressed to support itself and would have a big plastic pad on its underside to distribute its weight evenly over the foundation, and a plastic cover on top to keep the rain off and eliminate the need for a complete building to house it. It might even cost less than the original; certainly would if copies were built elsewhere. It also would accord the possibility of additional research in some of the materials which might be used."

He sat down, prepared to wait out the barrage of questions and objections until the weight of assembled scientific curiosity made itself felt.

From the Blakesville (Tenn.) *Blade:*

Former Deputy Sheriff Herman Mundy, dismissed from the force Friday for intoxication while on duty, will appeal through the Civil Service Review Board, Attorney Hiram Peck said today.

Peck said his client was the victim of "gross prejudice, unfairness and ridicule." He hinted, but refused to be specific, about connec-

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tions between the Mundy case and the "flying saucer" sightings Thursday night (see picture page 4.) "I have no comment at this time," Peck said, "come to the Civil Service hearings and you'll get it all."

Dayton, Ohio (AP) A spokesman for Air Force Project Bluebook said today that widely circulated photos of the UFO sighted Thursday near Blakesville, Tenn. were fakes, taken under controlled lighting conditions in a studio. They were, he said, among the cleverest and most technically excellent fakes yet encountered.

Senior Research Project Coordinator Morsak said: "Are there any further questions?" His drawn face begged that there be none.

There was no reply from the exhausted members of his team.

"Do you have anything to add or any questions, Surveillor Garfang?"

Garfang, who had discovered the unusual benefits of being a celebrity and found he liked them very much, said: "Only that I would like to return to that planet with your team and do what I can to find the source of the jump-drive-null effect."

"That can be arranged," said Morsak, "your bravery will be of benefit to us all. My team will probably remain here to attempt a laboratory duplication of the effect. You will be able to assist and act as liaison between my team and the one assigned to location research. I am very grateful. Gentlemen, let us adjourn and rest. We all need it. These primitives, or their planet, have shown us an effect we had not dreamed possible; one that is quite outside the scope of our knowledge and theory of the universe. We have no idea what might cause it, but we have been shown that it does exist; therefore, there must be an explanation. We will find it."

"Now that," said Doug Moore, "was some meeting. I saw you do it and I still don't know *how* you did it. And I sure as hell *still* can't figure out *why* you did it that way. It would have been so much simpler just to rebuild and be done with it instead of running in all this exotic new stuff now."

Wessenberger permitted himself the luxury of a quiet laugh. "Douglas, I keep telling you you must be more observant. When will you ever learn?"

Moore was very tired, and tired of being told to be observant. "Probably never," he said, "so tell me what you saw that I didn't."

"How I did it was simple," said Wessenberger. "I can't help it if I have been up to my neck in politicians so long I begin to think like them. While we were doing the post mortem on the fiasco I found out what each of those guys most

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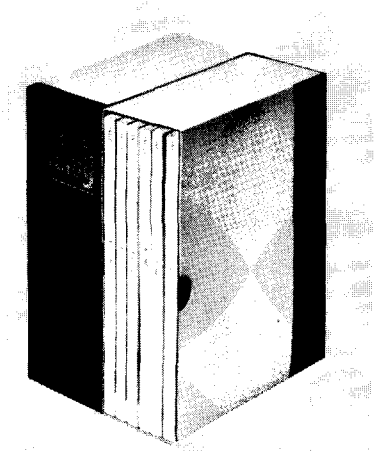
wanted to do research on, deep in his heart of hearts. I wish I could put in an expense voucher for all the coffee and booze I bought . . . I also found out what their companies wanted to do or were doing research on. Things like the lightweight structure, miniaturized capacitors and the plastics bit were fairly easy to come by. Some things we really lucked out on . . . just figure a set of odds on the chance one of those outfits might be wanting to play with broadcast power! And I'd been trying to figure a way to explain why I wanted a real long umbilical cable!

"Why did I do it like this? One thing only, which no one else noticed, so don't feel bad. Those cracks in the foundation where the thing was settling—it was *not* settling, Douglas. It was trying to pull itself up by the roots. I don't know why, but it was generating enough lift to crack a foundation of fifteen feet of solid concrete. We will find out why eventually, because we know it *does* do it. I'm guessing it didn't take off as it stood because it deformed the frame enough to short the capacitors and dump the charge.

"So you see, if you will stop and think, that we are about to build an accelerator hung on a self-stressed frame, carrying capacitors and controls within said frame, covered by a plastic cocoon, operating on broadcast power, resting on but not attached to, a concrete pad.



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You saw the picture in the paper the day after the fiasco? A fake, they said. Fake! Ha! As much fake as I am your Aunt Minnie!

"Douglas, when we build this thing we are going flying in it. Maybe not far—it will depend on how much power it needs and how much power our broadcaster provides. That should shake everyone up good and get us all kinds of federal funds to get down to serious business like finding out *why* it works, since it has already been demonstrated to us that it *does* work, and can be made to work much, much better." ■

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Opportunist

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When a man's whole world—his whole culture—is failing apart under the pressure of a different culture, he can simply give up, fight stubbornly and senselessly—or be an "opportunist," which is not quite what it sounds like!

GUY McCORD

Illustrated by Kelly Freas

I

Sublieutenant Marsten heard the detector beginning to beep and walked over to the screen. He said to his warrant, "What is it, Venizelou?"

Warrant Venizelou was scowling down at the screen. "Four men, on foot. No five. Metal on them, but not much."

Marsten said, "Who's on the laser rifles?"

"Jenkins and Motoshi on the one covering that direction."

The sublieutenant looked down at the screen unhappily, "What in the name of Krishna are they doing, just walking toward us like that? You better have Jenkins cut them down."

"Maybe they're women."

"Women don't carry weapons."

"Maybe they aren't carrying weapons. There's not much metal indicated.

The sublieutenant was irritated. He was a younger man than the warrant; younger and considerably less experienced, and was continually reminded of it. He knew that the warrant and the eight enlisted men in his detachment were aware that this was his first command and that he was newly out of cadet school. Not that anything had been his fault, nor had he lost any of his small command, but everything seemed to go wrong in this remote post.

The warrant added, "Not enough metal to be a carbine or even a sword."

The sublieutenant said, "We ought to be able to see them visually. Let's go up on the roof."

They went over to the side of the room where a ladder led upward. The building was approximately one hundred feet long and of roughhewn wood. The roof was flat, and at each end, behind sandbags, were rifle emplacements, two men at each.

The sublieutenant wore binoculars and now trained them. He

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looked for a long moment, then handed the glasses to Warrant Venizelou. "What do you make of it?"

The warrant put his eyes to the glasses, adjusted them slightly. "The one out in front's got an orange robe on."

"I'm not blind," Marsten said.

"They're coming from the direction of Nairn," Venizelou said. "Nairn's supposed to be pacified. United Mining's been recruiting there."

The lieutenant took the glasses back. He walked to the end of the roof and trained them on the approaching group again.

The two men stationed at the laser rifle looked up at him. One of them said, "Something, lootenant?"

Marsten said, "Five men on foot."

"You want we should ventilate them?"

"They don't seem to be armed."

The other enlisted man snorted at that.

The sublieutenant said, unhappily, "They're not even wearing kilts."

"The only good Caledonian's a dead one, sir, like everybody says."

The sublieutenant said snappishly, "If we killed every native on the planet, United Interplanetary Mining'd have to import labor all the way from Sidon. The cornet's warned us there's been too much bloodshed already."

He came to a sudden decision, returned his binoculars to their case and turned to the warrant who had come up to stand beside him.

"We'll go out and interrogate them."

"Yes, sir." Warrant Venizelou looked down at the riflemen. "You two keep slick, understand?"

"Sure, Warrant, we're not empty. I still say, ventilate them."

"That's up to the sublieutenant to decide. Just keep that rifle trained." The warrant turned and followed his superior.

In the room below, Warrant Venizelou picked up a short hand weapon and hung it over his shoulder by its sling, before following Marsten through the door.

They issued forth into the open and advanced about fifty feet from the building and awaited the coming of the unknowns.

After a few minutes the warrant growled, "They're all Caledonians."

"How do you know?"

"The size of them. The shortest must be seven feet. We don't grow 'em that size. That lead one in orange, might be done up like a monk or guru, but he's local."

Sublieutenant Marsten said, "A lot of these people have taken soma, Warrant. Quite a few have even studied at the pagoda in New Sidon City."

However, he unsnapped his holster and loosened the handgun.

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Warrant Venizelou slipped his own weapon from his shoulder and held it at a nonchalant ready.

Marsten called, "All right. You're near enough. What do you want? This is a military post and civilians are not allowed."

The orange-clad one continued to amble toward them, as though he hadn't heard—or didn't care. There was a dour quality in his face, but, super-imposed upon it, a gentle meekness, characteristic of he who has taken the hallucinogen soma. The others brought up the rear.

The warrant raised his weapon to the ready and trained it. "You heard the sublieutenant," he snapped. "One more step, and I cut you in two."

The orange-clad one came to a halt and said mildly. "We walk in the path of Lord Krishna, and hence know no evil." He looked at the sublieutenant. "Have you taken your soma, my son?"

The sublieutenant said impatiently, "I am a soldier, obviously not."

The monk said, "That is true, my son. He who is of the military has not accepted, as yet, the teaching of Lord Krishna: Thou shalt not harm."

Marsten said, "What is it that you want, Guru?"

The other said, "I am David and come from the town of Nairn where I am in charge of the Shrine of Kalkin." He turned and indicated the four men who followed him. All of these were attired in black robes, and all kept their peace. They were typical Caledonian clansmen, save that they wore no kilts, nor did they carry claidheammors at their sides. "These are acolytes, desirous of taking their soma and entering into oneness with Lord Krishna."

"All right. Very praiseworthy, I'm sure. But what are you doing here? Civilians aren't allowed in the vicinity of military posts, thank Krishna for that!"

"My son," the Guru David said chidingly, "you must not take the Lord Krishna's name in vain, for it is he who leads us along the path to the Shrine of Kalkin."

Warrant Venizelou waggled the muzzle of his gun back and forth in a negative gesture. "You heard the sublieutenant, Guru. What'd you want here? You better turn around and git on back to Nairn. Out here you got a good chance to get picked up by some raiding party and most clansmen don't go for none of you people that's taken soma."

The monk looked at him in gentle reproof. "When you have taken your soma, my son, all evil will depart you and no longer will you even dream of harming any living thing."

"I know, I know," Venizelou grunted. "But what'ya want, here?"

The orange-clad monk looked back to the sublieutenant. "My son,

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when the Guru Mark left Nairn to spread the message of Lord Krishna elsewhere, in my care he put a supply of soma sufficient for the needs of all in Nairn who might wish to enter into the Shrine of Kalkin. However, two weeks past, a raiding party from Dumbarton entered into the city and seized and destroyed the sacred soma. These four acolytes"—he gestured at his followers—"wish to follow the footsteps of Lord Krishna, but have no soma."

"Why come to me?" Marsten said. "This is a military post, not a pagoda. The nearest pagoda is in New Sidon."

"But, my son, that is many miles from here and we have not even horses. Since so many of the people of Nairn have taken soma, the raiding parties, unresisted, have driven off all the horses and we lack transportation. Is it not possible for you to communicate with the pagoda and have a fresh supply of holy soma sent to us?"

The sublieutenant thought about it. He said finally, "My detector indicated metal on you. What is it?"

"Metal?" the monk said blankly. Then, "Ah." He looked at his four followers in mild reproof. "The acolytes have not as yet taken their soma and hence have fears unknown to the initiates. They carry skeans, so as to fight off the wild dogs."

"Wild dogs," Venizelou said. "That's a new one. What wild dogs?"

The Guru said, "My son, long years past when the *Inverness Ark*, which carried the first settlers to Caledonia, crashed, there were aboard various life forms from Mother Earth, including pets. In the misty years that followed the crash, many of these took to the wilderness and multiplied. Today there are both wild dogs, who run in packs, and wild cats, descended from the common house cat."

The sublieutenant said, "Warrant, stay here with the Guru and his converts. I'll put in a report on this."

"Yes, sir."

Marsten turned and strode off for the buildng which housed his detachment. On the roof, both laser rifles were trained on the small group from Nairn. At the windows, the four enlisted men off duty were staring out at the newcomers. The lieutenant disappeared inside.

The Guru's eyes went about the vicinity.

"I do not believe I have been here before," he said. He took in the considerable wreckage. "There was disaster?"

"Kinda," Warrant Venizelou said. "This usta be some kinda village of herdsmen, like. When the cornet based us here, these wild clansmen were dullies enough to try'n

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give us a hard time. So we had to flame the resta the houses down."

There was infinite hurt in the face of the monk. "You mean this was a small town and you have driven the folk away?"

"That's one way of putting it, Friend. But it's the only way of dealing with these people. They're born bandits. They don't work. Or anyway, just enough to barely get by. They spend full time stealing from each other. They'll spend a week sitting behind a rock on a hillside, waiting to get a potshot at their neighbor, when they oughta be out plowing, or whatever."

"But . . . my son, this was their town."

The warrant was contemptuous. "They couldn't get it through their empty skulls that we were going to be based here—if they wanted it that way or not. We had to flame down half the clansmen the first day. The rest took to the hills. For a while, we let the women and kids stay, but you couldn't even trust them. Finally, we cut the houses down, except for the one we're in, and sent the rest of them packing."

"But where do they live now?"

Venizelou shrugged. "Up in the hills somewheres, I guess. From time to time they pull some trick. Used to come especially at night. Guess they didn't know our detectors can see as well at night as day. But we still can't get any distance from the base without running the chance of being cut off, or sniped at."

Sublieutenant Marsten returned. "All right," he said. "I called New Sidon City. The skimmer was coming out today, anyway, with stores. A supply of soma is being sent. Come on into the longhouse. You must be hungry."

Silently, the five followed him.

Warrant Venizelou slung his weapon back over his shoulder and brought up the rear.

Inside the commandeered longhouse, the sublieutenant led them to the living quarters and gave instructions to one of the enlisted men to get food and drink for the visitors.

The acolytes quietly took seats, but the orange-robed monk was obviously intrigued, in a horrified way, at the military establishment. The once clan longhouse had been converted into a barracks and military spick and span was the order.

The sublieutenant, somewhat proud of his first command, was not adverse to showing him around, and the follower of Krishna was properly impressed by such devices as the autostove, and properly shocked by the weapons.

He said, gentle reproof in his voice, "My son, before I took my soma, upon the urging of the Guru Mark, I, too, was a clansman, a raider. But my weapons were simple affairs, a claidheammor, a skean, a carbine. But these terrible

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things ..." He gestured at the warrant's short hand arm.

The sublieutenant grunted. "Fires a limited-range laser beam. Actually, weapons aren't as sophisticated as all that. No reason to be, I suppose. They haven't progressed to any degree beyond the point they were at way back when world government was first established on Mother Earth. By the time the League of Planets was formed, everybody took a dim view of further development of arms, and it's now against the League Canons. I suppose if ever man ran into another intelligent life form in the galaxy, especially an aggressive one, we'd go back to research."

"Laser beam?" the Guru said.

"Um-m-m." The other tapped the pistol at his hip. "This is the smallest size. It will cut a man, or horse, in two at a thousand yards. The warrant's gun, there, triples that range and more. The rifles, up on the roof, will cut through a spaceship, just as easily and the range is all but infinite. The laser is by far the superior of any projectile weapon ever devised."

The Guru shuddered and in protest murmured, "My son, my son."

Marsten shrugged. "If this planet is ever to be developed, we've got to curb these bandits. And the only thing they understand is force. They'd rather raid than eat. We've got nearly as many soldiers on this planet as there are men in the mines. And, if anything, we could use more. Sink a mine shaft, and, friend, you'd better have a military post right next to it, or you'll wake up some morning with all your technicians and laborers dead and everything portable stolen."

The Guru said in puzzlement, "But, my son, what is it that motivates you? You come from a far world to thus aid in the pacification of Caledonia. But why? Why do you feel it urgent to do so? The followers of the path of Lord Krishna who came from worlds beyond, I can understand, for verily the word of the final Avatara of Vichnu must be spread. But you have not taken your soma, and hence do not proselytize."

Warrant Venizelou chuckled.

Marsten glared at him in irritation but said to the monk, "Actually, the warrant is right. We're motivated by personal gain, actually. You see, we come from the planet Sidon. It's one of the frontier worlds and the socioeconomic system is free enterprise, each man for himself."

"I do not understand, my son."

Marsten looked at his wrist chronometer. He scowled and said, "That skimmer should be coming in. Warrant, take a look at the detector, focus it on long-range."

Warrant Venizelou left the room and the sublieutenant looked back at the monk. He returned to his subject. "In a society based on

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money, Guru, if you're not born with it, then you'd best devote your efforts to acquiring it as quickly as you can, because life can be pretty basic without an adequate supply. I was born with precious little. When the opportunity presented itself to come to Caledonia at triple the usual pay of a soldier and the possibilities of bonuses, I took it."

The Guru was aghast. "But, my son, you mean you fight for pay? You harm your fellow man for personal gain? Verily, my son, it is time you took your soma, turned your back on crass materialism and walked the path of Lord Krishna."

The sublieutenant sighed. "Yes, I know. However, there is a girl back on Sidon and a business I can buy into. Besides, this planet needs opening up, needs to be civilized, and if I didn't do it, somebody else would. United Interplanetary Mining has the concessions and so far has been able to satisfy the League authorities that all is legal and aboveboard here on Caledonia." The sublieutenant chuckled sourly. "It's fairly easy to convince authorities that are so far away that it takes a year and more to get a message back, but I've got a sneaking suspicion that if a representative ever came through here the fur would fly."

"I don't understand, my son."

Marsten grinned. "The League's got some pretty rugged rules pertaining to the development of one planet by another, when both are populated. United Interplanetary Mining has a reputation for cutting corners. I don't really know if the League of Planets is even aware of the fact that Sidon military forces are on Caledonia."

The warrant came back in and said, "I've got the skimmer on the detector, sir. I imagine it'll be in in a matter of minutes."

The sublieutenant came to his feet.

"All right, Warrant. Let us go. I hope to Krishna they brought a ration of nip. The men are going around the bend in this Krishna-forsaken post."

Warrant Venizelou said, "Yes, sir. However, if they have brought a few bottles, we're going to have to be sure that we get binged only two or three at a time. All these raiders need is for us all to be smashed at once."

The monk trailed along behind them, saying, "I am always fascinated to see one of the vehicles that travels through the air. Verily, the Lord Krishna works miracles beyond belief for you who come from the far stars."

They strolled out to a cleared space that had probably once been the small town's public square. The sublieutenant was followed by the warrant, the orange-robed Guru, and two of the enlisted men who were off duty. They stood at the side of the square and stared off into the north.

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Shortly a speck appeared and began to grow larger.

The sublieutenant said, "We used to use groundcars, hovercraft, but some of these clansmen are getting slick. Not in this vicinity, as yet, knock on wood. But the Highland Confederation raiders have captured some laser small arms and have flamed down several of our vehicles."

The Guru was shocked. "Caledonian clansmen using ought but carbines? But that is against the ban by which they live."

"Yeah," Venizelou said sourly. "They're learning fast."

The approaching skimmer was growing in size now. It swooped in, hovered for a brief moment above the field, as though checking before descent, and then dropped quickly and settled to rest in the square's middle. It was a craft of considerable size, quite capable of holding a score of men and their field equipment, or an equivalent amount of freight.

The group started off in the direction of the aircraft, the Guru walking diffidently to one side.

An entry port opened in the side of the vehicle and a uniformed officer in his early middle years stepped forth. The soldiers, headed by the sublieutenant, snapped to the salute.

Marsten said, "At your command Cornet DeRudder." He turned and indicated the orange-clad religious leader "May I present the Guru David of the town of Nairn?"

DeRudder's face darkened in a scowl. He stepped closer to the Caledonian monk and stared upward into his face.

He said finally, "It's been a long time, but I've been able to follow your career from a distance."

He turned to the sublieutenant and snapped, "His name isn't David and he isn't from Nairn. He was born in what was the town of Aberdeen and his name is John Hawk. He's also not a Guru. He's Sachem of the Clan Hawk and Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation!"

DeRudder spun and shouted at the aircraft, "On the double!"

II

But John of the Hawks was upon him. He threw both arms around the smaller man and carried him flat to the ground.

Even as he did so, a beam of sizzling light reached out from the roof of the longhouse and, in a sweep, literally cut in two the sublieutenant and his three men. Troopers began to pour from the entry of the skimmer, arms in hand, the last two stumbling as the skycraft began to ascend.

The beam flamed them down and then touched, as though with a magic finger, the skimmer which fell back to the ground in two parts and began to burn furiously.

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John of the Hawks wrenched from the struggling cornet's holster the handgun and rolled aside to direct the weapon at the door of the longhouse and the two remaining soldiers who came running forth. He cut them down, before they could bring their own weapons to bear.

All was death in the square now, save for John of the Hawks and Cornet DeRudder, both of whom now came to their feet.

John of the Hawks snapped, "Don't move!"

From the longhouse came two of his fellow Caledonians, both of them shrugging out of their black robes. Beneath, they wore kilts. One of them contemptuously wiped his skean on the robe before he tossed it away.

When they came up, John snapped, "Quickly, both of you. Into the vehicle of the air before it is entirely consumed. Any weapons, and especially books or tapes. Throw them out the door. Remain inside searching so long as you can bear the heat.

The two ducked into the smoking, burning skimmer and shortly various objects began to be tossed out onto the ground.

The remaining two Caledonians, also now in kilts, rather than black robes, issued from the longhouse and came up.

John said, "All are dead?"

One shrugged. "Why not? They are puny men. In close combat, any clansman is worth a half dozen of such."

John of the Hawks said, "Don't be overconfident, Thomas of the Davidsons. It seldom becomes a matter of close combat with these men from Beyond. They deal their death at great distance."

He looked at the skimmer, which was beginning now to burn more fiercely. "I had thought to build a signal fire for Don of the Clarks," he said. "But it will hardly be necessary. Aiii, their so-called laser rifles are a deadly tool."

Thomas of the Davidsons looked at the silent, deep-breathing Cornet DeRudder. "This is the one for the assembly of the Dail?"

"None else are left. Besides, he is a chief and hence more suitable." He looked at the dead men. "You had best gather up their weapons. Then return to the longhouse and begin to gather such books and tapes, weapons and charges for the weapons as are here. And also, their medicines. But above all, the books and weapons."

The second of the two clansmen looked at him strangely but turned and followed Thomas of the Davidsons to obey his superior's orders.

John turned back to DeRudder, even as his other two clansmen stumbled out of the destroyed skimmer, coughing, their faces flushed from the fire.

One called, "We can do no more, John of the Hawks."

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DeRudder said, "We'd all better get away from the vicinity of the ship. It might go up at any time. Explode."

John rapped, "Gather up these weapons. Get them away. They are the most valuable things on all Caledonia. They and the books."

The others followed his command, hurriedly, while John and DeRudder made their way to the side of the square.

"So we meet again, Mister of the DeRudders," John said.

DeRudder, who was obviously shaken by the precipitous actions of the past ten minutes, said, "Mister is a title, something like your Sachem or Sagamore. My name is Samuel DeRudder and my rank is cornet, somewhat similar to your rank of Raid Cacique."

"And what has happened to your companions of ten years and more ago? They who first came in the skyship *Golden Hind* and tried to cozen from us the products of our mines?"

DeRudder looked at him. "Harmon's, ah, fate, I understand you are familiar with. He showed up at New Sidon and for a time spread the faith of the Shrine of Kalkin—since you stuffed soma down his throat. The skipper of the *Golden Hind*? He died several years ago. He wasn't a young man and this exploitation of Caledonia didn't go as quickly as we first hoped it would. Manola Perez? Manola is still with us. He holds down an executive position with United Interplanetary Mining."

"And you?" John said. "You also hold a position with United Interplanetary Mining?"

"Yes, of course, and a military position with the Sidonian forces as well."

A cloud of dust was beginning to manifest itself on the skyline. John looked in that direction, diverting his attention from DeRudder for the moment.

Approximately sixty clansmen, carbines in hand, came riding up. Leading them was Don of the Clarks. His eyes went around the square, as did those of the whole troop.

"Aiii," he blurted to John. "All succeeded. I hardly expected it to."

He looked at the prisoner and scowled in memory. "It is Mister of the DeRudders. Older, but the same."

The clansmen were whooping and laughing in exuberation.

John snapped orders. "To the roof. Dismantle those two guns behind the emplacements. Rig litters on horses so that we can carry them. Get all the charges for them, they have on hand. Go through the longhouse with care. I want every weapon, every book, all the medicine."

One of the clansmen, a sagamore of the Clan Fielding, said, "But we have no spare horses for such plunder as this."

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John looked at him. "We will dismount sufficient men to make room."

Don said unhappily, "It is a poor place to be dismounted. We can ride two men on a horse. Double up."

John shook his head at him. "No. We must ride hard, for these posts of the men from Beyond are in continual contact with the forces in New Sidon City. When communication is interrupted, they will send out additonal craft to check on the reason. We must get these weapons and the prisoner back to the assembly of the Dail."

He turned to one of his subchiefs. "Richard, Sagamore of the Coopers, choose twenty men to be dismounted. We need their steeds."

Richard of the Coopers said blankly, "But what will they do?"

John said, "They can make their way on foot to Nairn and raid the Nairn herds. The whole town is composed of clanless slinks, by now. It will be nothing."

Richard said, "There are precious few horses left in the Nairn herds." But he turned to obey the command, calling for volunteers. There were few of these, however. The Caledonian is all but born on horseback and does not walk save in dire necessity. To volunteer for an action meaning certain death, yes; but to volunteer to give up one's battle steed? No.

DeRudder said, "What are you going to do with me?" His throat was dry.

John looked at him in calculation. "You are the reason for this raid, Samuel, Cornet of the DeRudders."

"The name is Cornet Samuel DeRudder," the other said sourly. "What do you mean, I am the reason? Obviously, you never expected to see me when I emerged from the skimmer."

"The Loch Confederation convenes in its annual Dail. The sachems and caciques wish to speak to a man from Beyond, to send a message to the Dail of the city of New Sidon."

"There is no Dail of New Sidon City."

"Whatever then is the equivalent."

DeRudder looked at the men pouring in and out of the longhouse, laden down with spoil which they were loading onto the beasts. "However, you don't seem adverse to doing a little looting whilst securing your messenger."

John didn't answer him. Instead, he began shrugging out of the orange robe. One of his clansmen came up, carrying shoes and a belt with sword and skean. The supreme raid cacique sat on a rock and took off the sandals he had worn in his guise as a Shrine of Kalkin monk, and replaced them with the shoes.

However, he took the belt, with

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its sword and dagger, and threw it away, to the ground. He said to DeRudder, "Your sidearm holster, please." He still carried the other's laser pistol in his hand.

DeRudder silently unbuckled his belt and handed it over.

John of the Hawks slipped the gun into the holster.

The clansmen in the vicinity were staring at him. The one who had brought him his shoes and sword belt offered him a carbine.

John of the Hawks shook his head dourly. "Keep it, if you wish."

The other stared at him. "But it is your carbine, issued to you when you came to first manhood."

"No longer," John patted the handgun he had appropriated from DeRudder. "Not with weapons like this available." He brought the gun forth again. "See that tree, up the slope?"

He pointed the gun and squeezed the trigger. A beam of light pencilled forth and reached for the tree. It missed by a yard or more. He moved the gun infinitesimally and the beam cut through the tree, toppling it. He released the trigger and looked about at the dozen or so clansmen who were watching him.

John said, "A man with a carbine would hit the tree, surely enough, but a hundred rounds of cartridges would never cut it down."

There was a hush.

John looked at the young clansman who had had custody of his things. "What is that in your belt?"

"Why, my coup stick."

"Break it. Throw it away."

"But suppose I have an opportunity to count honorable coup on one of the strangers from Beyond."

"Kill him instead."

If possible, the hush deepened. Even Don of the Clarks, blinked.

"But . . . it is not against the ban, but it is unseemly to shed the blood when it is possible to count coup instead."

"Not with Sidonians. These are not clansmen, they are clanless ones and they come from the planet Sidon not in honorable raid but to strip our world. They know no bans and never count coup. They only kill, and kill, and kill and they will do so until there are no clansmen left on all Caledonia, save only slinks and slaves."

John returned the gun to its holster and said to Don of the Clarks, "There is another such weapon on the body of the dead sublieutenant over there. I suggest you arm yourself with it."

His blood companion hesitated. "I'll . . . I'll think about it," he said. "As you know, such weapons are against the ban."

John snorted and turned to one of the other clansmen who had pulled off his leather shoes and was busily donning a pair he had brought from the longhouse.

"What do you have there?" John asked coldly.

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"Shoes from Beyond. Boots of the soldiers from Sidon."

"What is wrong with your own shoes, made of good leather?"

The young clansman grinned. "It is well known that the material from Sidon wears forever, or nearly so."

"Do you realize that if you become used to these articles from Beyond that your desire for them will continue to grow? Soon you will wish your kilts to be of the textile from Beyond, soon you will develop taste for the delicate food from Beyond, for the drink, rather than our own *uisgebeatha* of our fathers."

One of the sagamores laughed. "That last, at least, I can understand. The drink of the otherworldlings is the drink of the Holy!"

John turned his cold eyes on him. "Develop such tastes and ultimately you will seek this method of barter they have—money. To get money you must needs work for the Sidonians, in their mines, in their cities, as a clanless one works. In time, given such tastes and desires, you will become as though clanless yourselves."

The one who had liberated the boots grinned again and said, "Not so long as I can take these things in raid."

The looting of the longhouse converted into barracks had been completed and the laughing, shouting clansmen were tying the foreign weapons, books and tapes to the horses which they had commandeered from the twenty unhappy raiders. The litters for the two laser rifles gave them some trouble, but didn't present an unsurmountable problem, although the clumsy rig slowed down the animals considerably.

John of the Hawks said to DeRudder, "You can ride?"

DeRudder said, "On the planet of my birth, it is a sport. I can ride." He swung into the saddle of the horse the other had indicated.

John of the Hawks shouted, "Quickly, now! We ride hard, or we will be overtaken by the Sidonians before we reach the shelter of the hills."

With John, Don of the Clarks, and the prisoner in the lead, the column galloped off, the pack animals located between the advance elements and the rearguard.

DeRudder said, "How did you know how to operate the laser rifles?"

John, whose eyes were most often on the sky, in the direction of New Sidon City, far over the horizon, said, "Clansmen of the Highland Confederation, some months ago, seized some of your weapons in a raid. They also took prisoners some of your soldiers, and, ah, convinced them it would be well to give instructions in the use of your weapons from Beyond."

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"But you are of the Loch Confederation."

John looked at him. "We are beginning to learn, Samuel of the DeRudders. A delegation of the Highland Confederation came to us and showed us the workings of your laser guns."

DeRudder looked unhappy. He was a small man, by Caledonian standards, but even in his middle years, well proportioned, and even as a prisoner of these barbarians, possessive of a cool dignity. Cornet Samuel DeRudder was no coward, whatever else he might have been.

Don of the Clarks grinned at him mockingly. "It does not sit well that in the future you will perhaps be faced with your own weapons that break the ban, eh, man from Beyond?"

DeRudder growled, "If you dullies weren't so empty, you'd voluntarily come to our cities, or mining towns, and get with it. This planet is one of the richest in the system. Once under full exploitation and you'd have a paradise on your hands. This world could be a garden."

John's eyebrows went up cynically. "A garden for whom, Samuel of the DeRudders? Those who work in the mines are almost all, save for a few of your technicians, as you call them, Caledonians. I have never been in a mine, but from what I hear they are not gardens, Samuel of the DeRudders."

"Just Samuel DeRudder," the other said. "You've got to work before you enjoy all the things we've introduced from Sidon; better food, better medical care, better education, better entertainment, better clothes, houses . . . better everything."

Don laughed at him mockingly. "Perhaps you think these things from Beyond are better, Samuel, Cornet of the DeRudders, but for us, perhaps we prefer our own food and clothing and the longhouses in which we were born. Perhaps we prefer to spend our days in honorable raid upon our enemies, rather than the blackness of the mines."

DeRudder looked at him scornfully, "And do you prefer the mumbo jumbo medicine of your bedels, when you've been wounded in one of these endless skirmishes of yours? I understand, you yourself were once cured in one of our auto-hospitals."

Don was silent to that.

John said, "Some things, admittedly, that you have brought from Beyond are desirable. One of these is your medicine. But these things we can learn to use, without becoming slaves and spending our years toiling for your United Interplanetary Mining."

DeRudder was still scornful. "And you'd prefer to get it by stealing, rather than decent work."

John of the Hawks was irritated. He let his eyes sweep the far sky again, before answering. Then he

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said, "This work that you are so keen that we Caledonians take up —if it is so decent, so desirable, why do you not do it yourself? I do not note, Samuel of the DeRudders, that you spend time in the mines personally."

"I've worked in my time, John. For long years I was a ship's officer in the Exploratory Service."

John snorted, "Until one day your ship stumbled upon Caledonia and you saw the great opportunity to rob a whole world of its treasures. Then you stopped working, yourself, and began to scheme to get others to work for you, even though it meant the destruction of whole towns, and the dishonorable killing of thousands of women and children."

DeRudder looked at him. "You've been doing some reading. I don't think I've ever met a clansman with what you could call an education."

John said lowly, "That is one of the other things worth while that you have brought from Beyond, Samuel of the DeRudders. And we of the clans are beginning to realize that if we are to be able to expel you from our world we must adapt to some of your ways."

Don of the Clarks scowled at his words. He said, sourly, "Actually, as the Keepers of the Faith continually say, all necessary knowledge is in the four Holy books."

DeRudder allowed himself the luxury of a chuckle.

John was shaking his head. "No, Don of the Clarks. The Keepers of the Faith are wrong. The four Holy books are only the small remnant of the books that must have come to Caledonia on the *Inverness Ark*. On this planet Sidon, and on all the other worlds Beyond, there must be"—John looked at the otherworldling for confirmation—"dozens of other books." He added sharply, "Why do you laugh?"

"A joke of my own," DeRudder said wryly.

One of the sagamores behind called, "A vessel of the sky!"

John of the Hawks shot a quick glance back and upward.

"Scatter!" he shouted. "Make for the caves in the hills! Those who have weapons of the Sidonians, rally with me here. We will take the animals with the two laser rifles. Otherwise, all scatter and make for the assembly of the Dail!"

III

In times past, the meetings of the Loch Confederation Dail were held each year in a different town of the loosely united tribes. Today, with many of the towns leveled by the beams and bombs of the Sidonian invaders, it had convened in a large natural amphitheater in the mountains. Unlike the past, there were few women present, and little bartering going on. The invasion from the stars had cut

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the population, although the rate of decline has slackened now that the clansmen had adapted to the new methods of warfare

As John of the Hawks, his blindfolded prisoner and small troop came riding in, he let his eyes go about the vicinity. There were large natural caves, which had been increased in size even further through the efforts of the clansmen. He nodded approval. Given discovery by the enemy, all would be able to find shelter.

He said to Don of the Clarks, "Remove the blindfold from the eyes of Samuel of the DeRudders and have him put under guard. He would never be able to find this place again. I go first to see to the emplacing of the laser rifles, to defend us if we are raided whilst in session. Then I have to report to my fellow sachems."

Don grinned at him. "Stay clear of the bedels, John. Rumor has it that they are out for your kilts, for the proof is here, you have broken the ban a dozen times over."

John of the Hawks snorted. "And will break it a dozen times more, if ever we are to defeat the clanless ones from Beyond." He turned his horse and led his group off to locate suitable stations for the laser rifles

DeRudder looked after him thoughtfully and said, as to no one in particular, "There goes the most dangerous man on all Caledonia

Don said mockingly, "Perhaps that is the way you think of it, Samuel of the DeRudders, but for us, there goes the hopes for victory for the clans."

DeRudder looked at him. "There can be no victory for the clans, Don Clark. Brave your Supreme Raid Cacique undoubtedly is, but it is the existence of such that will continue to lead to your decimation, since he will never give up, and others will continue to be led to their deaths because of him. I recall to mind a great . . . war cacique you would call him . . . in the history of Mother Earth. He led a lost cause in a great civil war. So loved and respected was he, and such a genius in the military field, that he kept the war going for at least two years after his side had no chance of victory. His country was devastated, as a result, and tens of thousands of brave men on both sides who could have lived, died. For decades, for a century and more after the conflict ended, his countrymen continued to honor his memory, never realizing that he had been a curse, not a blessing, to his people. His name was Lee."

Don of the Clarks was scowling. He said, "We will see, man from Beyond. But brave clansmen can never be defeated by clanless soldiers, slinks who are afraid to fight honorably with claidheammor, carbine and skean, but must hide behind the defenses of large cities

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and kill at great distances and from ships from the air."

DeRudder said dourly, "It is an often held fallacy, clansman. Down through the ages, it has been repeated. However, I can think of few examples of tribesmen defeating civilized man with his weapons. You have never heard of them, but offhand I can think of Fuzzy-Wuzzies and Aztecs, Zulus and Incas, Sioux and Iroquois, courageous men all, who also held to the delusion that brave barbarians can defeat lesser men, when it comes to courage, but armed with the weapons of technology."

Don said, "I do not follow you, Samuel of the DeRudders. But come, I will see that you are held in custody until the convening of the Dail." He indicated the way.

"What do they want with me?" DeRudder growled.

Don grinned at him. "It is hardly for me to say, but the assembly of the Dail itself."

When all else had been attended to, John of the Hawks, his heart heavy, stopped off briefly at the tent which bore at its top his pennant as Sachem of the Hawks.

She whom he sought was carding wool in the women's quarters when he entered. She smiled up at him, gently.

"Alice," he said. "Alice of the Thompsons."

"John," she said softly. "Perhaps at long last you are prepared to take your soma and enter with me into the Shrine of Kalkin."

Agony came over his face. "Aiii, Alice. That is forever impossible. As impossible as our love, for there is no love for those who have taken this cursed drug of the men from Beyond."

"All love is with those who walk with Lord Krishna, John," she said with gentle reproof.

He took her by the hands and brought her to her feet and stared in misery into her eyes. "I know not why I keep you here. All others who have taken soma we have driven from the Phylum, save only you. Perhaps I should let you go to New Sidon, or one of the other cities. There, at least, you could attend the pagoda with the others who follow the new religion which is against the Holy. There perhaps you would at least be happy."

She looked into his face and frowned slightly. "But I am happy here, John. We, who have taken our soma, are happy anywhere, for we walk with Lord Krishna. And here perhaps I can do the work of Kalkin, the final Avatara of Vichnu, by urging you and others to take the holy soma."

He closed his eyes in pain and drew in a sighing breath. "Aiii, Alice," he said meaninglessly.

He turned and left her. And she looked after him, deep behind her eyes a hurt trying to come through.

John, as Sachem of the Clan

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Hawk, sat with his caciques in a body in the great circle that composed the assembly of the Dail of the Loch Confederation. Behind them stood the sagamores and reknown raiders, and behind them the multitude of full clansmen. In his immediate vicinity were the other clan leaders of the Aberdeen Phylum, including Don, who, as Raid Cacique of the Clan Clark, held sufficient rank to participate in confederation decisions.

One of the elder bedels said the praise to the Holy, and then retreated to the ranks of his fellows.

The aged Thomas, Sachem of the Polks, took his place at the amphitheater's center and said, "If there is no word of protest, the first matter to come before the Dail will be that of the invaders from Beyond. Already the criers have informed us that a major chief of the Sidonians has been captured by the Supreme Raid Cacique and can be sent with our ultimatum to this huge town New Sidon City. If there is no word of protest, I will ask that the man from Beyond, Samuel, Cornet of the DeRudders, be brought before us."

He held his silence for a moment, but no one spoke.

Two clansmen brought DeRudder from the cave in which he had been held, to the center of the amphitheater, and then withdrew to the ranks of their fellows.

Cornet Samuel DeRudder lacked dignity no more than he did courage. He stood erect and looked around at them, his eyes level.

He barked, "What do you want with me? I warn you now that this is one more crime to be punished. I would have thought you already had listed enough. In my kidnaping, your war chief and his group butchered a post consisting of ten men, not to speak of the entire complement of a Sidon spacefleet skimmer."

Thomas of the Polks looked at him evenly, "Do not speak of crime and punishment, man from Beyond. We hardly knew its meaning before your coming. Now we are beginning to learn. All over Caledonia, young people have been cozened into coming to your cities and mining centers. There they learn dishonorable ways, clanless ways that once they were taught were against the ban. There would seem to be no ban in your cities, save only these numberless laws you bring, each of which result in punishment if they are not observed, though some would seem impossible to observe."

DeRudder said, "We bring the laws of civilized men!"

And Thomas of the Polks said, "We do not want them."

"But you will get them, if you want them or not. Slowly, perhaps, but surely, the Caledonians are accepting the new. The younger people in particular are beginning to realize that the old ways were

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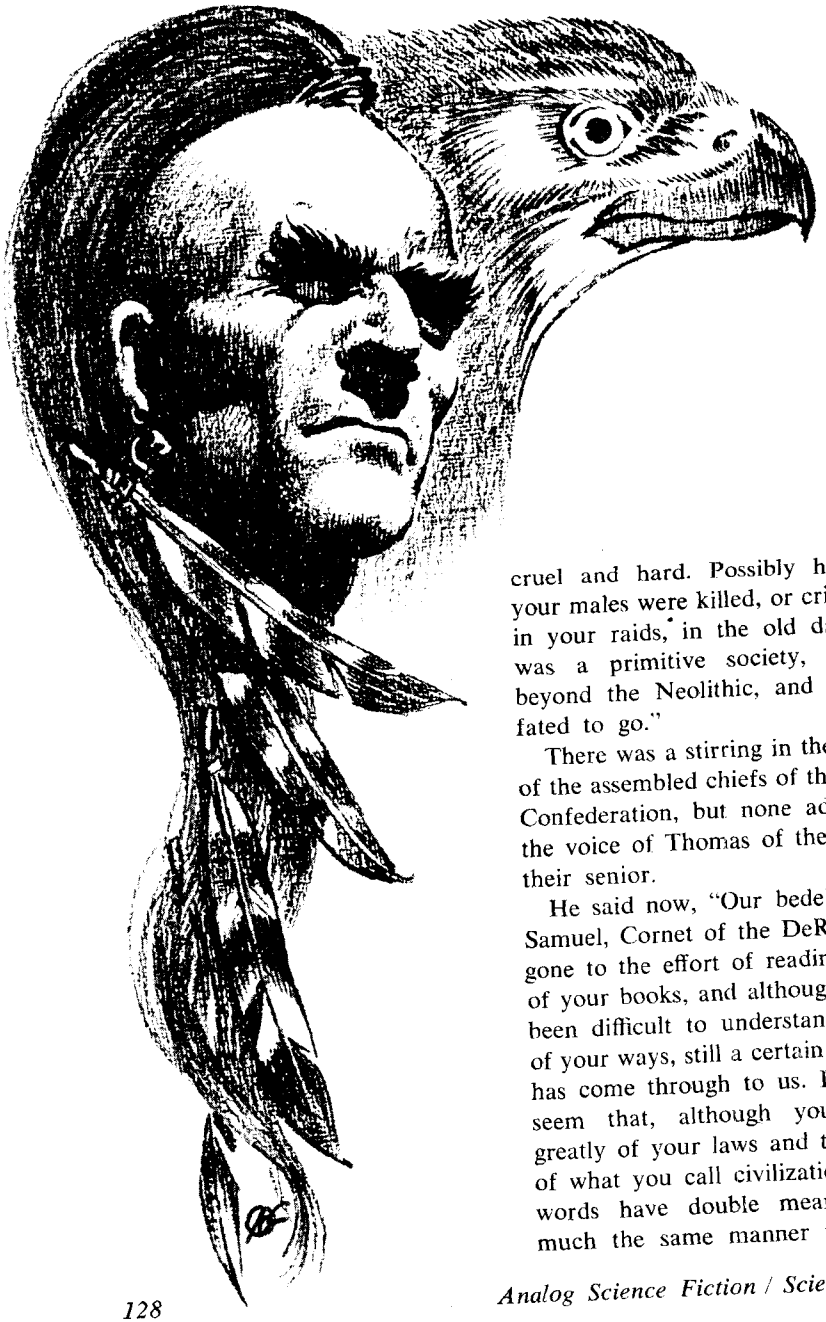

cruel and hard. Possibly half of your males were killed, or crippled, in your raids, in the old days. It was a primitive society, hardly beyond the Neolithic, and it was fated to go."

There was a stirring in the ranks of the assembled chiefs of the Loch Confederation, but none added to the voice of Thomas of the Polks, their senior.

He said now, "Our bedels have, Samuel, Cornet of the DeRudders, gone to the effort of reading some of your books, and although it has been difficult to understand many of your ways, still a certain amount has come through to us. It would seem that, although you speak greatly of your laws and the ways of what you call civilization, your words have double meaning. In much the same manner that you

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arrived long years ago with your supposed holy men who wished to give all soma and make clanless ones of them, so now you attempt to cozen us with lofty praise of your laws. However, we find that you do not, yourselves, abide by them."

"That is a lie!" DeRudder barked.

A sigh went through the assembly.

Thomas of the Polks said evenly, "You are not kin of mine, and thus the ban does not apply, however I do not lie. We have perused your books of laws of Sidon and of this League of Planets to which you belong. And thus we have found that illegally, by your own usage, you steal the products of our mines, and also the products of our fields, of our seas."

DeRudder said, "That is a lie! Every action taken by the United Interplanetary Mining Company is condoned by Sidon law and the Canons of the League of Planets." He snorted. "We have a panel of solicitors as long as your arm, making sure no League Canon is broken. We're not dullies. Sooner or later a representative from the League will show up. We want everything to be aboveboard."

"And how do you explain, Samuel, Cornet of the DeRudders, the fact that before you arrived on Caledonia, all the lands, the mines and the seas belonged to the clansmen? Now you claim ownership of wide areas, and they the richest."

"We bought them! We legally took possession of areas not claimed by anyone, and bought the rights of exploitation in other cases."

"But," Thomas said reasonably, "there were none who had the right to sell. The lands, the seas, the mines, belong to all. A single man cannot sell such things."

"They were no ordinary men. We signed our treaties with sachems, chiefs of tribes. If *they* haven't the right to sell their own property, who has?"

"No one has," the sachem said. "You do not bother to learn our institutions, man from Beyond. A sachem is elected by the clansmen to perform definite duties, which are multiple. But he has no power to sign away the lands of his clan."

DeRudder said, "All property belongs to *someone*, by our laws. If a head of a clan, or the combined heads of a Phylum, wish to sell the rights to mining properties, they can. So our jurors have ruled."

"We do not completely understand these jurors of yours, and how they can rule on matters here on Caledonia. But this we say. The Phyla of the Loch Confederation reject your presence on Caledonia, as do, we understand, the Highland Confederation and that of the Ayr, and, undoubtedly, many other confederations beyond these. We reject your claims to rights to mine our resources, to plant the fields

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for your own uses, to fish the seas. We reject all this and demand you return to your world of Sidon, and leave us alone and to our own Holy and our dreams of the Land of Leal to come. That is the message we wish you to take to the Dail of your City of New Sidon and to your United Interplanetary Mining Company."

DeRudder looked at him contemptuously. "You went to a lot of trouble to send a message that'll be ignored, old man. United Interplanetery Mining isn't about to leave Caledonia. And what are you going to do about it? You have no power capable of enforcing your desires. Half your towns have already been destroyed. And here you are, sulking in the hills, afraid to attempt to raid the cities, any more. Afraid to come out like men, take your punishment and join up with the rest of this planet on its march to progress."

"You will see whether or not the clansmen of the Loch Confederation are slinks, man from Beyond, all in good time. And now, prepare to return to your New Sidon City." Thomas of the Polks turned from him and addressed the assembly once more.

"If there is no protest, the second matter to come before the Dail will be submitted by Donald of the Warrens, senior bedel of the Loch Confederation."

No one spoke and an elderly, black-clad religious came forth from the ranks of the bedels and Keepers of the Faith.

There was a defiant element in his aged voice. "I say the faults of John, Sachem of the Clan Hawk of the former town of Aberdeen, and Supreme Raid Cacique of the Confederation."

There was a hush that could be felt.

John of the Hawks stood, shocked. He looked about him in bewilderment.

The bedel went on, doggedly. "Since being raised up to Supreme Raid Cacique, John of the Hawks has broken the ban a score of times and more. He has forbidden his men to count honorable coup on the enemy which is against the ban. He has used weapons that are against the ban. He has read books other than the Holy books, books from Beyond that should be read, if at all, only by bedels and Keepers of the Faith. It is against the ban. He has spoken slightingly of the powers of the Holy and has cast doubt about the existence of the Land of Leal for which we all yearn when life is through. It is against the ban."

John of the Hawks was breathing deeply. When the other paused, he held up a hand. "Now hear me. You have listened to this clanless one from Beyond. He has explained to you that the Sidonians will never leave of their own will. If they are to go, we must expel

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them. Think you, Donald, Bedel of the Warrens, that we can expel them with claidheammors and carbines? We must learn from them. We were like children, when it came to killing when first they arrived. We must learn to use the laser rifles and their handguns and pistols that fire a beam of light."

"It is against the ban!"

"Then the ban must go!"

"The ban is the word of the Holy."

"I doubt it. Who says so, besides the bedels and Keepers of the Faith?"

"It is against the ban to speak thus!"

"Then so be it, Donald of the Warrens. But if I and my clansmen are to defeat the Sidonians, then must we use these new weapons. We must read the books and find still other methods to confound them. Can you tell me another way in which we can expel them from Caledonia?"

"Yes! By returning to the ways of the Holy. Since your breaking of the ban, his face has been turned from us. Thus our towns have been destroyed, our people slaughtered. It is all because we have turned from the faith of our fathers." The bedel spun and addressed the chiefs. "I say John of the Hawks be cast down from his post as Supreme Raid Cacique."

David, eldest bedel of the Aberdeen Phylum came to his feet. "I say John of the Hawks be cast down from his rank as Sachem of the Hawks."

William of the Hawks, the clan bedel, came sadly to his own feet. "I say John of the Hawks be cast down from clansman and that his kilt be stripped from him."

Don of the Clarks was on his feet. "I say the praises of John of the Hawks," he shouted. "Who among us has so often been sung by the bards? Who among us has so often had the criers shout his exploits through the streets of the town?"

Donald of the Warrens said, "It has never been a question of the bravery of John of the Hawks, nor how often the bards have sung his praises. It is a matter of breaking the ban and bringing disgrace to the Clan Hawk, the Phylum of Aberdeen and to the entire Loch Confederation. He must go, before the Holy allows us all to be destroyed."

William of the Davidsons called from the ranks of the sagamores, "I say the praises of John of the Hawks. Since he has led the clansmen in raid, never before have we had such success. Why, even three days before we killed sixteen or more of the men from Beyond and seized much of their property, and not one among us was lost. He is the greatest Raid Cacique that ever the bards have sung."

And Donald of the Warrens answered doggedly, "It is not contended that John of the Hawks is not a leader of men. No one would

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ever brand him a slink. But it is not the matter. He violates the ban and thus turns the face of the Holy against us."

Richard of the Fieldings was on his feet, hotly. "He has saved my life three times, in raid. I say the praises of John of the Hawks!"

It was William, Bedel of the Hawks, who answered this time, his voice infinitely sad. "He is my own kin, but he breaks the ban and teaches that others break it. He must be cast down, or the faith of our fathers is destroyed."

There were more to have their say, many more. First from the ranks of the sachems and caciques, then, in their turn, the clansmen, but the final say was from Mildred, a Keeper of the Faith, as respected as any.

"The question today," she said, her voice carrying, in spite of the softness of tone, "is not that of John of the Hawks. None would deny his position as our greatest raider. The question is, do we abandon our traditions, in our efforts against the men from Beyond, or do we go on secure in our faith in the Holy? I say, John of the Hawks must be stripped of his clansman's kilt and turned away."

Ultimately, it was put to the vote of the sachems and caciques and shock came over the face of John and his closest supporters when the vote carried by a small majority. He turned in his bewilderment to the assembly of the clansmen, but when the vote was taken here his shoulders slumped in disbelief.

Donald of the Warrens said, "It is now time to dishonor John, the clanless one. Who among all will volunteer?"

Several clansmen and even caciques began to move forward, old enemies and rivals, John saw dully.

But Don of the Clarks stepped forward more quickly than any others. He stood before his former commander.

John shook his head. "And . . . and you, too, Don of the Clarks?"

Don, agony in his face, struck him symbolically with his coup stick. "Only that none other could dishonor my blood comrade," he said hoarsely.

He reached out and unbuckled the belt of John's kilt, and pulled it away. A clansman came up and proffered the colorless kilt of a clanless field worker. Dully, John belted it about his hips.

Don had taken the holstered laser pistol which John had appropriated from DeRudder. Now he took it to the cornet.

"You'd best have this," he said flatly. "On your return, you will possibly be subjected to raiders. Not of this confederation, but others do not know of your position as messenger from this Dail to New Sidon City."

Samuel DeRudder belted the holster about him. He gestured with a thumb in the direction of John, who, his head low, was being

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escorted away by two clansmen, both of whom wore shame in their faces.

"What happens to him now?" DeRudder said.

"What matter to you?" Don of the Clarks growled.

"I just wondered," DeRudder said dryly. "There goes the man that but a few hours ago you named the hope of the Caledonians."

IV

Don of the Clarks and Cornet Samuel DeRudder ate before the Sidonian was again blindfolded, mounted on a horse, and led away by the Clan Clark Raid Cacique. During their ride of an hour or more, Don said little, immersed in his own bitter thoughts.

Finally, they halted and the blindfold was removed.

Don of the Clarks pointed. "In that direction lies your accursed New Sidon City. You will probably not make it until late tomorrow, at earliest. In your saddlebags are bread and meat. For the sake of your message, I hope you are not stumbled upon by raiders from the Highland Confederation, nor those from Ayr."

DeRudder looked at him questioningly. "Your friend, John, seemed to be in favor of uniting with these other confederations to combat us. I wonder why you haven't done it."

Don looked at him uncomfortably. "Perhaps because, although it is not against the ban, it is not meet. The Keepers of the Faith oppose such large-scale raids that whole confederations would be involved. Too much of the blood would be spilt."

DeRudder laughed suddenly. "The United Interplanetary Mining Company ought to subsidize these Keepers of the Faith of yours."

The clansman's face darkened, but he said nothing. Instead, his eyes had gone to the ground and he scowled at something he evidently saw there.

He said, "I'll go on with you for a way."

DeRudder was mystified, but shrugged it off and kicked heels into the side of his beast.

A few minutes later, he saw the reason for the other's continued presence. They topped a rise and spotted before them, John trudging across the heath, alone and unmounted.

He heard them, shortly, and turned. His face was empty.

Don drew up and dismounted. He unstrapped the harness around his waist and held out the claidheammor and skean scabbards, and the reins of his animal.

He said simply, "I can walk back."

John looked at him. Finally, he said, "As a clanless one, I am forbidden the wearing of the claidheammor."

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Don said, "Yes, I know. And any clansman who found you, without clan kilt and bearing arms would attack you. But what is the alternative . . . John? Your only way to survive, now, would be to enter the longhouse of some clan as a servant. And I do not think he, who was once Supreme Raid Cacique, could ever become a servant. I understand that in the mountains some clanless ones, products of the destroyed towns, have banded together and survive by raiding both the Sidonians and the Phyla. Perhaps you can find them."

John shook his head at him in surprise. "You would have me turn into a clanless bandit?"

"I would have you live, for until you were stripped of your kilt . . . John, we were blood comrades. And . . . and though it be against the ban, for me, we still remain." He turned and walked back in the direction from which he and DeRudder had just come.

John looked after him until he disappeared over the rise of hill.

DeRudder said dryly, "Greater love hath no man, eh?"

John said, "You wouldn't understand, Samuel of the DeRudders." He swung his leg up over the saddle.

"Perhaps I would," DeRudder said. "There's another alternative to joining up with the hill bandits, you know."

John grunted. "Yes. I can continue to roam the heath until I run into a raider band and am cut down."

DeRudder fell in beside him. "You can come to New Sidon City."

John grunted again. "It had never occurred to me."

"Think about it."

John was irritated. "What would I do in this city of yours? I know nothing of cities. Besides, you Sidonians carry the blood feud with the once Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation."

"We don't have any such institution as the blood feud, John. And, above all, we need capable men, and especially capable Caledonians, if ever we are to develop this fantastic world."

John was scowling. "But you and I carry the blood feud. You shamed me when I was but a lad."

DeRudder said in deprecation, "You forget your own ways, John. I thought a clanless one, such as yourself, was not allowed such luxuries as vendetta."

The big man flushed. "You are correct," he said lowly. "I had forgotten." He added, "For that matter you, too, are clanless. We are both men without honor."

"Among civilized men, you can gain or lose honor only through your own actions."

The conception was new to the Caledonian and he could only scowl as he thought about it.

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"But one who is born clanless?"

"As everyone else, makes or fails to make his own degree of honor, or ethics, if you will."

"Any Keeper of the Faith can tell you that true honor and faith are in the hands of the Phylum, and down, through it, to the clans."

DeRudder looked at him in amusement. "Don't you think you have finally arrived at the point where you should reject some of these teachings of the Keepers of the Faith? In fact, you already have. That's why you're on your own. By the way, you'd better make up your mind whether or not you wish to accompany me to New Sidon City."

"Why?"

DeRudder pointed. "Because there is a skimmer, and they've probably detected our body heat and will be on the scene shortly."

John stared up at the distant dot in the sky. "It seems as though my decision has been made for me. If I refuse to go with you, they will undoubtedly cut me down with their flamers."

"I can see no particular reason to allow you to take to the hills and do your best to raid our mining developments."

As the aircraft grew larger, John, staring up at it, said, "What makes it fly?"

DeRudder chuckled. "John, you wouldn't understand if I tried to tell you."

"I am not a fool, Samuel of the DeRudders," the Caledonian said coldly.

"It is not a matter of being a fool. You would not even understand the terminology. When you are in New Sidon City, you can attend school, possibly at night. At least, you can already read, and have even done a certain amount of studying of some of the books you've captured from us—in spite of the bans of your Keepers of the Faith. In a year or two, perhaps you'll have progressed to the point where aerodynamics need not be a complete mystery."

"School?" John said. "I thought you would put me to work in your mines."

"School, too," DeRudder said. "I keep telling you, we are here to develop this benighted planet. Uneducated, half savages don't lend themselves to a civilized culture. One of our biggest tasks is to get the population into schools. Besides, our mines are not the only projects that call for employees. There are a thousand tasks involved in conducting a city such as New Sidon. Where you'll fit in, I don't know at this stage."

The skimmer came swooping in, circled them twice, then settled some fifty feet off.

A loudspeaker said, "Identify yourselves."

DeRudder barked, "I am Cornet Samuel DeRudder of New Sidon City and this is John Hawk, formerly of the town of Aberdeen but

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who now is to take a position with United Interplanetary Mines."

An entry port opened and a warrant and two enlisted men issued forth, all three with hand weapons at the ready. The warrant saluted DeRudder but turned a beady eye to the giant Caledonian.

"Drop those toad stickers you're wearing, friend. You won't need them in the city."

John unbuckled his belt and let the claidheammor and skean drop to the ground.

DeRudder said, even as he dismounted, "You can take us to New Sidon? I don't seem to recognize you, Warrant."

"Yes, sir. We're from Berkelev, sir, but sure we can take you back to your own city. It's more or less on the way. What are you doing out here, sir?"

DeRudder said briefly, "I was captured by clansmen of the Loch Confederation, but they turned me loose. This man volunteered to return to New Sidon with me."

"Turned you loose? That's a new one, sir." John had dismounted, too. Now the Sidonian warrant approached him warily and gave him a quick frisking. "Sorry," he said, "but you know how it is."

"I vouch for him, Soldier," DeRudder said testily.

"Yes, sir. However, I know a case of where one of these dullies got taken prisoner and into a skimmer, and what'd'ya think happens? Once a couple of hundred feet up into the air and he whips out a sticker like they carry, and nigh finishes off the whole crew before somebody manages to flame him down."

John bore the search, which revealed nothing. The warrant led the way back to the skycraft, the wary enlisted men, guns still at the ready, bringing up the rear.

Inside the craft, John took a deep breath as it began to rise. Long years before he had once ridden in a surface craft of the men from Beyond. Now, as then, there was a sinking in the belly as the strange means of locomotion began. They were seated in the rear, in moderately comfortable metal seats, quite obviously a compartment for soldiers being airlifted from point to point when trouble arose. By straining, he could see out a small port. He closed his eyes briefly as the ground sank away.

DeRudder said mockingly, "And how, John Hawk, are your clansmen going to defeat enemies that have devices such as this at their command?"

John cleared his throat. "I don't know."

Through the port, John could see the city loom before them. He had seen it before, from a distance, and from the hills, but he had not realized its magnitude. And this was but one of the cities of the men from Beyond, nor did he know if it was the largest. But certainly no

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town in the Loch Confederation began to rival it, or any other in all Caledonia, so far as he knew.

It was situated along a river, was walled, and in the approximate center was a great cleared space, obviously landing ground for such craft as the skimmer in which they rode, and great ships from space as well. Their own air-borne vessel made for it, the pilot receiving landing instructions as they came in.

John attempted to disguise his relief that the trip through the air had ended without tragedy. Although, in his time, he had scaled fairly formidible mountains, he had never liked the sensation of height.

They issued forth from the skimmer and a small land car, supported by air cushions, came skittering up.

"Take us to the ad building," DeRudder said to the enlisted man behind the controls.

"Yes, sir, Cornet." The other saluted.

John followed the Sidonian into the back of the vehicle and surreptitiously held on, as they zoomed off.

The ad building, as DeRudder had called it, was to the far side of the field. There was an air of ultra-efficiency about it never witnessed by the Aberdeen clansman before. Caledonians were on the philosophical side when it came to even such matters as obeying sagamores and caciques during their raids. Obedience to a raid chief was a voluntary thing, not truly a requirement.

They left their vehicle and John followed DeRudder into a large entrance. Two guards at the door snapped to attention, presenting their hand weapons in a salute. The cornet flipped them a semi-salute in return and strode on, unspeaking. John looked at them from the side of his eyes. Little men, by Caledonian standards, as all these Sidonians were little men; few indeed were as much as six and a half feet tall. However, although he didn't know the old saying of another frontier age, he was aware of the truth of it. *All men are created equal—Sam'l Colt made 'em that way.* He would hate to see what these two could do to a raiding party, from a distance of half a mile or more, with their weapons.

Samuel DeRudder came up before a desk. The man behind it looked up, startled and then began to scramble to his feet to salute.

DeRudder said, "At ease, Ensign."

"Cornet DeRudder! We had given you up for lost. The detachment at . . ."

"I know, I know. I was the sole survivor. Clansmen of the Loch Confederation took me prisoner."

"You're lucky to be alive, sir!" The ensign sank back into his chair.

DeRudder said, "Any developments since I've been gone?"

"Not especially." The ensign ran a hand back through his hair, as

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though in despair. "Two more skimmers banged up. Both got back, though. A patrol was wiped out up in the hills where those Highland Confederation clansmen are. It's evidently worse up there than here, sir. Leading a patrol through those mist-shrouded hills full of murderous seven-foot howling barbarians is like trying to collect crocodiles in the Amazon Park by diving into the river and swimming after them. And air transport's no good either. Those Highlanders are crack shots, and sitting in all those mist-covered hills, in caves and such, where the detectors won't spot them. Come down below the mist to take a look, and what-do-you-know? You're dead."

Cornet DeRudder wasn't amused. "Got any answers, Soldier?"

"No, sir. I sure haven't. Trying to pacify this wild bunch of cattle-rustling, horse-stealing, murderous pillagers is more of a job than we ever thought it was going to be. We thought it was kind of a police action. We raid them if they gave us any trouble. But that's their favorite occupation, raiding and being raided. It's like saying, 'Junior, if you take any more of that cake, I'm going to make you eat a whole dish of ice cream.' "

The ensign could evidently see that the cornet still wasn't amused. He said, "Who's this, sir?" He pulled a report blank toward him.

"John Hawk. A Caledonian from the former town of Aberdeen. He's come to take a job with the company."

The ensign frowned, unhappily, taking in the looming former clansman and war cacique.

"I vouch for him," DeRudder said impatiently.

"Yes, sir. It's just that we're kind of busy. Won't be able to process him for several days."

"I'll take him into my quarters. He's a cut above the ordinary, Ensign."

"Yes, sir." The ensign made some marks on the report. "Got it, sir."

"And, Ensign, see to it that a new I.D. Credit Card is cut for me and sent up to my quarters. All my things were taken, of course. My I.D. number is M-16A-15,643."

"Yes, sir, I'll do that immediately."

John followed the other back through the entry. DeRudder waved a hand, summoning another of the small land cars. It came swooping up to them and they climbed in.

As they progressed through the streets of New Sidon City, John again tried to hide the wide-eyed element he was projecting. He had never seen so large a town; he had never seen such numbers of people; nor had he ever witnessed such a scurrying, such an amount of construction; such obvious purpose in what on the surface would have seemed utter confusion. A Cale-

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donian town was on the slow-moving side, even during the yearly festival of the Dail.

DeRudder hid his amusement.

They darted down a side street and shortly to an apartment house. It was, John decided, at least the size of a longhouse on the ground floor alone. But then it towered some ten stories, as though one longhouse was atop another. For the moment, he could see no advantage to such an arrangement, for surely the aged and the very young would have difficulties climbing such a height.

He was glad he hadn't said anything to that extent to DeRudder, since all was explained when they entered the gravity lift and were whisked upward. It had taken considerable for John to step into the shaft after the Sidonian, nor did he object when the other took his arm to steady him. There was no shame in not knowing how to conduct oneself in situations through which one had never been before.

The cornet's apartments were on the top floor and so situated as to dominate the city. It came to John that this man must rank high among the chiefs of the Sidonians. As high, perhaps, as John had once ranked in the Loch Confederation.

DeRudder led him into what was obviously a living room, though furnished and decorated in a manner completely foreign to the Caledonian. He walked over to a piece of furniture set into the wall and said over his shoulder, "A drink? I suspect we could both use one."

John was not particularly a drinker, but a good many things had happened to him within the past twenty-four hours. He said, "You have, perhaps, *uisgebeatha*?"

DeRudder said, "I have a descendant of your national beverage. We call it whiskey." He selected a bottle from the shelves, brought forth two glasses, and poured. He handed one of them to John.

To the Caledonian warrior's amazement, the contents were cool, although the surface of the glass seemed at room temperature.

"You want water or anything with that?" DeRudder said.

John shook his head. "We have a saying in Aberdeen, that there is already too much water in *uisgebeatha*."

DeRudder grunted. "It's a saying that seems to have spread about a considerable portion of the galaxy, whatever the beverage involved." He held his glass up. "To your successful adaptation to New Sidon City, John of the Hawks."

John held his own glass up but his words were bitter. "You forget that I am no longer John of the Hawks, but a clanless one." However he tossed the drink back.

He was prepared to snort and cough his throat clear, but then his eyes widened. He stared down into the glass. "It is *uisgebeatha*, without doubt," he said. "But such *uisgebeatha*!"

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DeRudder poured him another slug. "I told you that civilization has its advantages when it comes to material things. Among them, nip that can be appreciated and drunk for pleasure rather than just to get binged."

He led the way into what was obviously a bedroom, even to the Caledonian.

"You can stay here until you're assigned quarters of your own. Over there's the bathroom." He made a grimace. "You could use a bath, if you don't mind my saying so." He looked at John with mild suspicion. "You wouldn't have lice, would you?"

"Lice?"

"Or this planet's equivalent. Little bugs that particularly get into your hair."

"No," John said. "Though it has been more difficult to maintain body cleanliness since you flamed us out of Aberdeen."

DeRudder looked at him. "I was opposed to that, John. Not that I wouldn't have been in favor had I thought it would end the continual raids. However, I don't believe you bring barbarians to heel by bombing their towns."

"What is a barbarian?"

"I doubt if you'll understand. It's an ethnic period in man's social evolution. You have savagery, barbarism, eventually, ah, civilization. All three periods are subdivided."

"And what period is this city of New Sidon at, Samuel of the DeRudders?"

"That's a good question. Come on in here and I'll show you how to work the plumbing. As I recall, you have running water and somewhat primitive plumbing in your longhouses, but not bathtubs, refreshers or even showers, as we know them." DeRudder hesitated and there was a wry element in his voice again. "New Sidon? I suppose you could say she's at an early period of civilization, considering socioeconomic system, and such."

In the bath, DeRudder demonstrated hot water, cold water, needle sprays, soap and towels. John was astounded. He asked various questions as to where the hot water was heated, where the refuse went, and finally just what soap was.

"I'd forgotten you didn't have soap," DeRudder muttered. "One simply presupposes soap. How in the world did your culture lose it, after the *Inverness Ark* crashed?"

"I don't know," John said defensively. "Evidently, we lost many things during the misty years that followed."

"All right," DeRudder said. "You're on your own. I'll get you some other clothes."

"What is wrong with my clothing?"

"Dirty, among other things. Besides, this is New Sidon City, not Aberdeen. If you went around in

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that kilt, you'd stand out like a walrus in a goldfish bowl."

"What's a walrus and a goldfish bowl?"

"Never mind. I'll be in the other room."

John experimented with the bathing facilities. He hated to admit that they fascinated him as well as refreshed him beyond the point he could ever remember. There were many aspects to this way of life of the men from Beyond.

In the next room, he could hear Cornet DeRudder on some sort of communication device. The other was saying, "I want you to send up several outfits to try on a Caledonian. He's about average size, perhaps a little bigger. Say seven feet two, give or take an inch. No, he has no insignia, as yet. Hasn't been processed. Just send standard United Mining coveralls."

The voice broke off and after a few minutes spoke again. "Cornet Samuel DeRudder reporting." The language then deteriorated into officialese that John couldn't follow.

When he emerged from the bath, it was to find several outfits laid out on his bed. He scowled in distaste. Never in his life had he worn other than kilt, shirt and jerkin. Nor did the outfits that the men from Beyond clothed themselves in seem comfortable.

DeRudder called from the living room. "Could you hurry, John? I have to leave."

The coveralls weren't hard to figure out. John found the outfit that fitted him best and climbed into it. He wondered, a bit narrow-eyed, what would happen to his field worker's kilt. Possibly his benefactor, if such DeRudder could be thought, would dispose of it in some manner. For a moment, he hesitated.

In the living room, the other was seated in a chair, another drink in hand. He looked at the giant of a man thoughtfully. "Nobody'd ever take you for a Sidonian."

There seemed no particular answer to that.

DeRudder said suddenly, "John, I'm going to warn you. No tricks."

"Tricks?"

"You're unarmed and don't know the town. There are police all over it. They are armed, and they keep track of Caledonians, particularly Caledonians whose clothes indicate that they aren't long in town."

John said bitterly, "I am as though in a different world, and you are the only person I know in it. I don't even understand how to leave the building, did I wish to leave. What kind of trick did you expect of me, Samuel of the DeRudders?"

"Sam DeRudder," the other sighed. "And you're simply John Hawk, as of arrival in New Sidon. Come on into the dining-kitchenette and I'll show you how to manipulate the auto-chef."

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As John followed him, he looked at the smaller and older man from the side of his eyes. "Why do you do all this, Samuel . . . Sam DeRudder?"

DeRudder said, "I don't know. Perhaps because as I told you we need good men if we're ever going to develop Caledonia. You're a good man."

V

DeRudder gave his new guest a tour of the apartment, finally winding up again back in the living room.

He indicated a desklike piece of furniture upon which was situated a blank screen. "This is a standard, universal communicator," he said, sitting down before the screen. "Its workings are simple enough, however, you won't be using it, at least for a time, except for reading. This switch connects you to New Sidon's library."

For the next ten minutes, DeRudder demonstrated to the fascinated Caledonia how to utilize the library banks.

Finally, John said, his voice holding a trace of awe. "What else will this box from Beyond do?"

The other chuckled. "Well, as I say, it's a universal communicator. It's a combination video-phone . . ."

"What is a video-phone?"

DeRudder told him, keeping impatience from his voice.

In seeming disbelief, John said, "You mean, with this you can talk to and be seen by anyone on all Caledonia?"

"Not exactly," Sam DeRudder said wryly. "The other chap would have to have one, too. Then you could talk to him simply by dialing his number. You see, here is the number of this communicator. If anyone dials it, then a summons rings and I answer. If I am not here, the message is taped and I play it back when I return."

"But anywhere on all Caledonia? Any distance? With no trouble whatsoever?"

DeRudder chuckled again. He said, "Well, there is one small necessity. If your call is made anywhere outside New Sidon, you'd better have a valid I.D. Credit Card."

"What is a valid I.D. Credit Card?"

DeRudder brought a wallet from his tunic and flicked it open. "Here's my new one. Your friends back at the Dail confiscated my original . . . precious lot of good it will do them. At any rate, in ordering anything that involves credit exchange, it is necessary to put your credit card in this slot. The cost of the product, or service, is then deducted from your credit account."

John shook his head. "Perhaps I will understand later. Will it be necessary for me to have such a card?"

DeRudder put his wallet away.

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"Yes, of course. As soon as you have been found employment, you will be issued a restricted credit card. It is impossible to survive without one, under ordinary circumstances. So long as you live here with me, of course, I will handle all matters pertaining to your expenditures."

"What is a restricted credit card?"

DeRudder took a breath, looked up at the chronometer on the wall. "The kind issued to Caledonians."

John looked at him. "Caledonians are in New Sidon, what clanless ones are in one of our towns. Is it not so?"

DeRudder was uncomfortable. He came to his feet. "Not exactly, John. However, there is such a thing as security. I am a cornet in the Sidon armed forces. As such, I have access to information and resources available not even to lesser ranking Sidonians. And now, I'm going to have to leave you temporarily. Make yourself at home. Eat and drink what you will. I suggest you spend your time at the library banks, familiarizing yourself with the layout of the town, and with a few of the"—he made a wry face—"bans that exist under the Canons of the League of Planets."

John was slightly taken aback. "Then you, too, have bans?"

The other said dryly, "Believe me, John, every society I have ever heard of has had bans of one type or another. Some of them can get on the far-out side."

He made his way to the door, saying over his shoulder, "For the time, I wouldn't suggest you leave this apartment. You're so unacquainted with the workings of a semi-modern city that you might get lost, or even hurt in the traffic."

"Very well, Sam of the DeRudders."

When the other had gone, John sat himself down cautiously at the communicator and threw the switch connecting him with the library. Carefully following his host's instructions, he dialed city maps and spent the next hour pouring over them, his eyes strained, his forehead wrinkled, in concentration.

In time, the communicator's controls became easier for him and, fascinated, he skipped from one tape to another, sampling the endless multitude of works available in the library banks.

He was stymied once or twice.

In ordering a particular subject, listed in the library banks, a voice said metallically, "Security limitations. Priority of M-3. If you wish this tape, please present your I.D. Credit Card."

In each case, John looked blankly at the screen and switched to a new subject.

At long last he came to his feet, went back into the dining-kitchenette and spent some time fiddling with the autochef. Disasterously, as

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it turned out. In his fascination with the library banks during the past two hours, he had forgotten part of DeRudder's instructions pertaining to the ordering of food. All he could bring forth was a series of desserts. However, as with many ultra-active men not particularly prone to alcohol, John had a sweet tooth worthy of a ten-year-old. He polished off several pieces of chocolate cake and a slice of lemon meringue pie, and returned to the communicator, deciding inwardly, that, if nothing else, the invaders from Beyond were far and in advance of Caledonian pastry cooks.

He spent another half hour scrutinizing tapes before hearing an unfamiliar musical note. He looked up, scowling.

It sounded again.

He came to his feet and looked about the moderately large room. But the sound had come from the direction of the apartment door. He walked over in that direction, frowning still, and bent down to the point where he could look into the door's screen.

John was puzzled. There was a face there. A feminine face.

He cleared his throat and said, "I am John, Sachem of the . . ." But then he shook his head and said, "I am John Hawk. This is the longhouse of Samuel of the . . . Samuel DeRudder. May the bards sing the praises of your man-children. What do you will?"

The face laughed. "That's quite a reception. I'm Nadine Pond. Cornet DeRudder sent me over. If you'll activate that button to the right of the door, I'll come in."

"Activate?"

"Push it."

"Oh." John pushed the button and the door opened.

By Caledonian standards she was a tiny thing, not more than five and a half feet tall. John's first reaction was to wonder if she was an adult, but, then, obviously she was. She was attired in a neat, trim uniform, the skirt of which was shockingly short by Aberdeen standards, and John kept his eyes studiously from her knees.

She entered briskly, touched another button and the door closed behind her.

She looked up at him and shook her head. "I'll never get used to the size of you people. What in the world do you eat?"

He looked at her blankly.

The question was evidently rhetorical. She led the way into the living room and, without ado, unslung the handbaglike burden she had been carrying over her shoulder and lowered it to the couch before sitting herself down.

Nadine Pond said briskly, "Cornet DeRudder is being held up longer than he had expected, being interrogated on his, uh, adventures with the Loch Confederation bandits."

"Bandits!" John blurted in indignation.

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She cocked her head to one side. "What else would you call them? I had gathered the opinion that you defected and came in on your own."

John lowered himself into the one large chair which was actually suited for his build. His face was strained, as though rejecting his own thoughts. He said slowly, "It is true that my fellow phyletics stripped me of my kilt of clanhood, but . . . but they are not bandits."

"Why not?" she said briskly. "They refuse to come in and abide by the treaties made with the friendlies."

"The friendlies . . .?"

She shrugged impatiently. "A term we use for the natives who have cooperated with us, either through taking soma or desiring to take advantage of the new cities and their occupational and educational facilities."

John frowned at her. He said, "Not all of what you say is understandable. This is my first day in . . . in New Sidon. Who are you?"

Her voice became brisk again. "I am Assignment Clerk Nadine Pond. I've been given the job of doing the preliminary processing of you, John."

He took her in at greater length now. She was pretty by his tastes. Alert, clean of features, a bit overly earnest of expression perhaps, and dark of complexion as Caledonian lasses went—but pretty. She was obviously on the efficient and businesslike side, as well, a little too much so in dealing with menfolk than was seemly.

John was irritated by her. He said, grudgingly, "To how many worlds do you of Sidon and United Interplanetary Mining come and confound and kill the clansmen and then, in contempt, call them natives and bandits and friendlies?"

She looked at him contemplatively. "Are you sure you've come to us with a cooperative mind, John Hawk? Perhaps it would be best if you took soma."

"No!" he said hurriedly.

She shrugged. "Those who take it never regret doing so—I am told."

"But you yourself have not."

She made an offhand gesture. "That's true. However, to get back to your question. I am not from Sidon. I work for United Interplanetary Mining, but I originally came from the satellite system of Jupiter, a Sol planet. However, the answer is *many*. In various parts of the galaxy, United Interplanetary Mining and similar organizations develop many unsettled, partially settled, or even sometimes well populated worlds. Caledonia is unique in some respects, but not in that."

John's eyes narrowed slightly as he leaned forward and the words came out grudgingly, as though he were trying to bite them back and couldn't. "And how do you explain

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to yourself cooperating in landing upon this world of we Caledonians and turning us into . . . bandits and friendlies?"

Nadine Pond turned and touched a control on her piece of equipment. "I think, perhaps, I should be recording this," she mused. "I am not sure that it is going to be easy to place you, John Hawk. However . . ."

She took a deep breath. "Here is how I explain it to myself. I am an anthropologist, John. Do you know what that means?"

"No."

"I am a student of man's institutions and follow a school that believes in the evolution of society. In spreading through the galaxy, man comes up with various institutions, some of them, as a result of accident, shipwreck or whatever, throwbacks to periods that supposedly we have progressed beyond. Working for United Interplanetary Mining gives me a chance to study them." She hesitated. "Do you understand what I am saying?"

"Only some of it."

"Well, your Caledonia is an example. When your *Inverness Ark* crashed, centuries ago, you Caledonians were thrown back into a primitive society. Slowly, you have been working your way back."

John said, "We of Caledonia were happy before the arrival of you from Beyond."

She cocked her head. "Were you? All of you?"

"Yes!" he replied. "All of us."

"Even the clanless ones? Even the widows and orphans of those who died in your endless raids upon each other?"

He took a deep breath and stared at her, in silence.

She went on. "Happiness is an elastic word. The savage or barbarian, disease wracked, inadequately fed, continually on the verge of want of one type or another, ground down by rituals and taboos, may not understand that the coming of progress will eventually result in a longer, healthier, happier life. How can he understand? He's never witnessed it."

"We were happy. We wanted none of your changes, your so-called progress."

She shook her head at him sadly. "They would have come whether or not we did. We are just speeding things up. For instance, John Hawk, what was your rank before you were expelled by your clansmen?"

His head went up. "I was Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation."

"Ah? I have studied Caledonian institutions. I have never heard of the office before."

John scowled. "I was the first."

She made an amused moue. "Ah, then you can adapt? Supreme Raid Cacique. The *rex,* in embryo."

"Rex?"

"The democratically elected war chief of the ancient Romans. Later, the office began to evolve into car-

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rying the prerogatives of a king. And tell me this, John, do you have a priesthood that is freed of the necessity to contribute to the clan economy?"

He wasn't sure he completely understood but she said, "We have bedels and Keepers of the Faith. They are too busy with the Holy books and maintaining the observance of the ban to spend time in the fields or with the herds."

"Um-m-m," she nodded. "Class divided society already begins to rear its head; a leisure class. And you have clanless ones, I understand, who work for you as servants but cannot participate in clan government and decisions."

"But they are clanless ones!" he retorted.

"Aren't they, though? And, tell me, John, in this ultra-free, ultra-happy society of yours—do those clan members who possess a larger number of horses and cattle, or other private property, have a greater voice in the councils, are they more quickly listened to, more often elected to clan office? Do they sometimes control the vote of less prosperous clansmen?"

He simply scowled at her.

Nadine Pond chuckled. "John, your Caledonian culture was at a crossroads even before the *Golden Hind* first landed and discovered you. Probably within your lifetime, regardless of our arrival, you would have seen institutions crumble and new ones arise. Possibly you would have tried to fight it, and would have gone down, or possibly you're enough of a slick to have been one who profited, but, willy-nilly, the changes would have taken place."

"I understand only a little of what you say, Nadine of the Ponds."

"Nadine Pond," she corrected. "John, I understand that you Caledonians recall nothing of the history of your people, the Picts and Scots of northern Britain."

"I have read a little of Earth history, in the books we have captured from you of Beyond."

"Suffice to say that when they were first discovered they were"—she twisted her mouth in amusement—"to use some idiom of yesteryear, reckless mountain boys that made the Hatfields and McCoys look like a bunch of flower children. Their favorite entertainment for an idle week end was raiding their neighbors, stealing the cows and horses, and anything else portable, murdering anyone who got in the way, and burning their houses—sometimes with the inhabitants amusingly barricaded within. This was generally considered just good, clean sport, not to be taken really seriously."

John nodded. "They were honorable raiders."

"Weren't they! Neither the Romans, Anglo Saxons, nor Normans invaded the Highlands, they went in for building walls to keep those horrible barbarians out, instead.

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Even the Vikings didn't raid Scotland, as they did Ireland, England and France. When they tried, with an army of forty longboats, they were received so joyously by the local Highlanders that they decided against a return engagement. Of the forty longboats, after the battle, only two took off down the loch, and only one of those got home."

"They were not slinks, these ancestors of mine!" John said, a touch of pride in his voice.

"That they weren't. However, time marched on, and primitive clan institutions began to be affected by the arising English civilization to the south. And there's always some native talent around that's sharp enough to see that it's not merely the way the wind is blowing, but the inevitable direction of cultural evolution. Fighting a change in the weather is one thing; trying to fight a change in the climate is something else.

"Such clans as the Campbells, over a period of generations, gradually got the idea of law-and-order instead of war-and-raiding. The MacGregors were another. Rob Roy, the Scottish national hero, something like Robin Hood, belonged to the MacGregor clan, the one that was too thoroughly given to stealing and murdering for even the Scots to stand, so that the Scots Privy Council passed a law making it illegal to *be* a MacGregor. He was, in full, Rob Roy Campbell MacGregor.

"At any rate, such prominents among the Scots learned to adapt to changing institutions and wound up owning Scotland. When feudal ways took over from primitive clan ones, the slicks became the feudalistic lords."

John said in puzzlement, "Why do you tell me all this?"

"Because, John, the changes are coming to Caledonia, as once they came to early Scotland. There are those among you clansmen who will see the current cannot be bucked. Perhaps they will be looked upon as traitors by the rest, but it is they who will survive and lead the people."

"Lead them into slavery," he growled.

She looked at him for a long thoughtful moment. Finally, "Perhaps what immediately might seem slavery to a clansman, John Hawk, but in actuality a step forward in man's development. In nature, a species that does not develop usually dies. And in society a culture that fails to progress, eventually dies, as witness both the Egyptians and the Mayans."

"Who?" he scowled.

"Never mind." Nadine Pond came to her feet and frowned down at him, thoughtfully. She said at last, "John Hawk, there's something about you I am not sure of. You are possibly one of the poorest recruits that has ever come over to us. Or possibly, the best. I am going to check back with Cornet De-

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Rudder, before going further with you."

He stood as well and attempted to cover. "You must realize," he said, "that only this morning I was John of the Hawks, Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation."

"So I am told. You have not had time, even if it was in your nature, to learn to dissimilate. For the present, good-bye, John Hawk."

He saw her to the door, not actually knowingly cavalier, as she thought, but to be sure that the door was closed behind her, after she left. He stood there looking at it for long moments when she was gone.

But then he turned abruptly and made his way to the bedroom Sam DeRudder had assigned him. He went to the bed and took up the field worker's kilt he had discarded earlier. He carried it into the dining-kitchenette where he located a sharp steak knife. He carefully inserted this in the strong hem of the kilt and cut the threads.

A plastic card dropped into his hand and he looked at it carefully. Only part was understandable to him. It read: *I.D. Credit Card M-16A-15. 643, Cornet Samuel DeRudder. Priority M-3.* Otherwise there were what were obviously code letters, a portrait of DeRudder and a thumbprint, as well as several punched holes.

He went back into the living room and sat himself again at the communicator. He thought about it for a long moment, finally reached out and dialed.

A robotlike voice said, "Security limitations. Priority of M-3. If you wish this tape, please present your I.D. Credit Card."

John put the credit card in the slot and waited, unknowingly holding his breath.

The screen lit up and he stared at it. Finally, he reached out and took up paper and stylo and began to sketch clumsily. It took him a full ten minutes.

He dialed again and again the card was required. He took further notes and further sketches. At long last, he settled back into the chair and thought it all through with careful deliberation. But, then, he didn't have too much time. He had no way of knowing when DeRudder might return.

He flicked the library-banks switch off and activated the videophone one. He thought another deliberate moment, to be sure of memory, then carefully dialed. This now, was the crucial point. The credit card was still in the slot.

The screen lit up.

John said, "This is John, Sachem of the Hawks. Quickly, let me speak with Don of the Clarks."

Within moments, Don of the Clarks was there, his face expressing jubilation.

"John! We did not expect you so soon!"

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John spoke quickly, urgently. "We were picked up by one of their vehicles of the sky. I am in the longhouse of Samuel of the DeRudders. He does not know I have his card of identity that all those of Beyond must carry. Nor does he know that you are in possession of a captured communicator through which they speak long distances. Now, here is the immediate information. I have been able to locate the city plan. Here is a sketch I have made of the sewers that lead into the river."

John held the sketch he had made earlier to the screen.

Don of the Clarks twisted his head and barked instructions.

Agonizingly long moments later, John took that sketch away and substituted the second he had made.

While it was being copied, he hurried through various questions with Don of the Clarks.

At last they were through and Don's face again filled the screen.

John, Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation, said, "We must not waste time. At any moment, I may make some great mistake and reveal all. Send the messengers to the Highland Confederation and to the Confederation of the Ayr. The time of action is soon to be upon us."

VI

John of the Hawks spent the next several days in a round-the-clock accumulation of knowledge of the ways of the newcomers from Beyond. Sometimes, he was accompanied by Sam DeRudder, but, in surprisingly short order, he was able to find his own way about New Sidon, and preferred to be alone. It was obvious that DeRudder had something in mind in regard to John beyond what originally had been the case, but thus far he hadn't brought up the question. And, so far as John was concerned, so much the better. As it was now, he had the time and opportunity to check out a hundred items which would profit his long-term plans endlessly.

There was much that surprised as well as interested him.

He found, for instance, a considerably larger number of Caledonians among the citizens than he had expected, nor were all of these women, children, elderly or defeated elements. He could tell himself, in contempt, that the combat-age men he witnessed attending schools, working on the construction of buildings, or otherwise participating in the economy of the city, were slinks who should have been up in the hills fighting the invaders. However, inwardly he realized that it wasn't just that. There was a something in the air that would appeal to that type clansman with an inquisitive turn of mind. There was so much new and fascinating; tools, weapons, ways of doing things.

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He did what there was to be done, in the way of checking out the city's defenses and was pleased to find what he had suspected. The military was actually a secondary thing as far as United Interplanetary Mines and the Sidonians were concerned. There was possibly one soldier among the invaders from Beyond for each four civilians. Immediate complete conquest of the planet wasn't so important as getting on with its exploitation. The soldiers were a necessary evil, not an end.

And the city defenses indicated that the invaders had made the most basic of all military mistakes. They were underestimating the enemy. The walls, perhaps, were strong enough against raiders equipped with carbine, claidheammor and skean; the gun emplacements at each of the four corners of the city walls, would have decimated horse-mounted clansmen. However, the defense authorities obviously never expected to be attacked by forces armed with more sophisticated weapons.

He didn't spend all of his time wandering the streets of the city and gawking at constructions and equipment unknown previously to him. In fact, the greater part of his time was spent in the apartments of DeRudder, leaning over the communicator screen.

That first evening, Sam DeRudder had taught him still another use of the device. In the library banks were not only the tapes of books, but an endless variety of films depicting life as it was to be found on a thousand and more worlds. And where fact left off, fiction took over, so that he was even able to run and rerun shows pertaining to the ancient Picts and Scots of whom Nadine Pond had told him.

Above all, he was fascinated by the Scotland of the present. His ancestoral home was so far and beyond anything he could ever have imagined but a week ago that it was as though a fairyland. Surprisingly enough, particularly in the smaller communities, he could still see racial characteristics that pertained to his own people. Perhaps these far cousins of his were not quite the same size as the clansmen of Caledonia, but the light complexions, the craggy faces, the eyes, were all there. He couldn't quite analyze the strange tightening of heart strings.

It was after a surreptitious checking upon sewer outlets that he returned to the apartment to find Sam DeRudder there with another.

John entered the living room and came to an abrupt halt, his eyes bugging.

He blurted, "*Mister of the Harmons!*"

Harmon looked up from where he sat on a comfort chair and said, "The name is Milton, John. Milton Harmon. Milt to my friends—such as they are."

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Sam DeRudder came over from the auto-bar, drinks in hand. He proffered one to Harmon. "That's right, you two haven't seen each other since John's coming to New Sidon."

John blurted, "But . . . but you wear not the robes of the followers of Krishna."

Harmon's aging over the past few years had softened considerably his sourness of expression, acidity of voice. He said, and there was a far wistfulness somewhere, "And I am not always sure, John, that I appreciate Sam's giving me the antidote at the end of my decade rather than letting me take the booster dose."

"Antidote?" John, still flabbergasted, looked from his old enemy back to DeRudder.

Sam DeRudder, amused, handed John the second drink and headed back for the bar to dial himself one. He said, "Take that. You look as though you need it."

And then, from the bar, "You've been assimilating fast, these last days, John, but you simply haven't had the time to pick up all aspects of life beyond Caledonia. You might spend a couple of hours at the communicator checking out soma."

John was bewildered. "I don't understand." He looked at Harmon, as though accusingly. "You mean, you are no longer a worshipper at the Shrine of Kalkin, the false religion against the Holy?"

Harmon said ruefully, "I wouldn't state it exactly that way."

Sam DeRudder returned with his drink. "Briefly, John, when soma first came on the scene, the League took a tolerant view, as usual in matters pertaining to religion. However, there were dangerous aspects to the use of soma which you're fully aware of and I needn't go into. League Canons now provide that the initial dosage of soma may not be effective for more than a decade. At that point, they who have taken it have two courses. They may take their booster dose, and, ah, continue to follow the path of Lord Krishna. Or they may take anti-soma and return, well, to the land of the living."

Harmon said, a note of deprecation there, "It's not the way I would put it, Sam. Until you have taken soma yourself and walked with the Lord Krishna, you can have no idea of the reality of the experience."

"However, no thanks," DeRudder said. He looked back at John. "Milt Harmon is an old, old associate. When his decade was up, I made sure to be there and made sure he took anti-soma, rather than a new charge."

"And what effect does this anti-soma have?"

"It creates a prejudice against another dosage of the hallucinogen. Otherwise"—the Sidonian shrugged —"there are few who wouldn't

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continue to tread the way of the Avatara of Kalkin and the path of Lord Krishna."

John finished his drink in one fell gulp, but not taking his eyes from Harmon.

That worthy shook his head in self-deprecation. "John Hawk, I suppose I owe you apologies. You see, one effect of a decade spent with Krishna has permanent aspect. Though I am now"—he looked at DeRudder—"normal, many of the frailties and shortcomings of my former self have been burnt away, or, if you will, cast aside. So then, my apologies for the harm I caused you"—he twisted his mouth ruefully—"or tried to, in years past."

John was saved the necessity of a reply to that by the musical note of the door.

Sam DeRudder went to answer it and returned with Nadine Pond, brisk and efficient as ever, her recorder slung over her shoulder.

She nodded to those present. "Milt. John. Have you already got underway?"

Harmon said, after coming to his feet to acknowledge her presence. "We've just been giving John a rundown on the shortcomings and longcomings of soma."

"Longcomings," she snorted. "I've never been an admirer of the effects of soma on the average person. For some, yes; the mentally upset, perhaps, under proper medical direction."

Milt Harmon reseated himself and said softly, "If you've never experienced it, don't knock it."

"You should know," Nadine Pond told him, finding a place for herself in a comfort chair. "However, so far as outfits such as our United Interplanetary Mining sponsoring its use on recalcitrant natives, it defeats its purpose. Those who take soma are not good workers. They lack aggression, ambition, initiative. Perhaps your devoted follower of Lord Krishna is right, but whether or not ambition and aggression are desirable traits, men without them are not good workers. The zombi story is a myth. A zombi would be all but worthless, even at brute physical labor. Two mentally and physically healthy men set to work digging a hole would accomplish the task in half the time a squad of zombis would. Why? Because they'd figure out some way to lighten the load which is, after all, on their shoulders. The zombis wouldn't care."

"I have heard the argument before, as one promoting free enterprise," DeRudder said from the auto-bar where he was dialing the newcomer a drink.

The assignment clerk, cum anthropologist, was impatient. "Not just free enterprise, or capitalism, which is the less mealy-mouthed term, but any socioeconomic system. Even under chattel slavery that slave who was bright, aggressive and had initiative, could get to

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the top—unless his master was an unbelievably stupid dully. Many an ancient empire was in actuality run by slaves. They might have borne such titles as secretaries or majordomo, but they were the brains behind the emperor. The same applied under feudalism. That man with push and brains could overcome the handicap of being born of low degree."

"So far, you've mentioned class-divided society."

"The same applies to a collectivized society. Whenever man works, the bright and aggressive will attempt to make the load lighter and he is as valuable under socialism, or even anarchism, for that matter, as he is under private ownership. Do you labor under the illusion that when the Russians were building their so-called communist state that the bright and efficient, the innovator and progressive, didn't forge to the top?"

"They had a lot of disadvantages, in that particular example," DeRudder argued, although not very strongly.

"That they did. But those who thwarted them eventually disappeared from the scene, especially the zombi types. As a Caledonian would say, the proof is there before you. Because they *did* reach their goals. It took time, but eventually they industrialized and became the second of the world powers of the period and the reason was that eventually direction eased out of the hands of the politicians, at least on an industrial level, and into the hands of scientists, technicians and engineers."

DeRudder sighed and lowered himself into his own favorite comfort chair. "So much for soma," he said. "Let us get to the project at hand." He looked at John contemplatively. "It's not up to us to make final decisions, of course. This is simply a preliminary investigation of the possibilities. However, John Hawk, how would you like to be mayor of New Sidon?"

John, who was even still in a mental whirl over the words of the past fifteen minutes, could only gape.

"Mayor!" he blurted.

Harmon chuckled. Nadine Pond smiled amusement.

"That's right," DeRudder nodded.

"But . . . but if I understand . . . if what I have been reading this past week . . . but that's your equivalent of eldest sachem of a town. Even more than that."

"Um-m-m, that's right."

"But, I don't understand. I am a Caledonian. New Sidon is a city of you from Beyond."

Sam DeRudder leaned forward. "Only up to a certain point, John. We Sidonians, and others from Beyond, as you call it, have come to a crossroads. The initial exploitation of this planet's resources has moved very rapidly, in fact, we've reached what was once called the take-off

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point in industrialization. But that's the economic aspect. Now it's time for the political to be considered."

"But I'm a Caledonian," John repeated.

"Yes," Nadine Pond said mildly. "And this is Caledonia."

Harmon leaned forward to put in a word. "Were you of the opinion that United Interplanetary Mining expected indefinitely to dominate this world by force of arms?"

John looked at him, blankly.

Sam DeRudder took over again. "John, the thing is this. Our mining concern is interested basically in Caledonia's platinum, nothing more. Not even most of your other metals. The value of platinum is such through the League planets, that it can profitably be shipped through space. In return for exploitation rights, the company can and does give a great deal to Caledonia and would like to contribute still more. In fact, the more it does contribute, the more profitable its own efforts. For instance, it would like to sponsor petroleum production, if for no other reason than that it is extremely expensive to cart its products all the way from Sidon, or elsewhere. It would like to see schools turning out local doctors, so that it wouldn't have to import such employees from the advanced planets. It would like to see skimmers being manufactured in Caledonian factories, because they're so expensive to bring in from over-space."

John blurted, "But what has this got to do with my taking high office in a Sidonian City?"

"That's the point," Nadine Pond said. "This must not remain a Sidonian city. It must become a Caledonian city. The time has come that you friendlies begin to take over the responsibilities of running your own affairs."

John settled back in his chair, his face blank.

Milton Harmon said urgently, "You make a mistake if you think that we of the League planets are simply evil destroyers of what has been the way of Caledonia. Opportunistic, we admittedly might have been but we bring much that you need, including the wherewithal, eventually, for this planet to join the League and take its place with the other advanced worlds."

"But we Caledonians have no desire to join what you call the advanced worlds."

DeRudder snorted. "More of you than you might think, John Hawk. You have been up in the hills with the malcontents, and have no idea of how rapidly many Caledonians have been coming around. There is security here in our new cities. Security and plenty, and the opportunities to become educated and to advance."

"But why me!"

Nadine Pond said, "John Hawk, from what you have told us, you were the youngest sachem in the

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whole Loch Confederation, not to mention the fact that you also fought your way up to becoming Supreme Raid Cacique. Obviously, you have leadership ability. You are also the highest ranking Caledonian who has ever come over to us."

Harmon said, "Do not misunderstand the offer. We do not expect simply to put you in the office of mayor and maintain you there. It would be an interim position until political matters could be mapped out to fit local conditions, then elections would be held."

"Elections?" John said. "How can you have elections? All in New Sidon are clanless."

The anthropologist took over there. "In your Caledonian society, John, you were represented in your government body through the clan. Your Phylum, or tribe, governed itself by a muster of sachems and caciques who had been elected by the adults of the clans they represented. But in the new system, your family would make no difference at all. You would vote for your representatives from the city ward in which you live. New Sidon amounts to a city-state. Later, when we consolidate the planet a bit more, those who live outside the cities will vote in geographic areas we'll call counties."

She looked at DeRudder and there was a sarcastic aspect to her expression. "All this isn't just altruism, of course. The fact is that United Interplanetary Mining and the planet Sidon have stuck their necks out a bit. Caledonia is rather far from the jurisdiction of the League, but it won't be long before authorities will be turning up to see if League Canons are being observed. The fat will be in the fire, unless self-government is being observed."

DeRudder said, "To quote a favorite phrase of Milt, here, that's not exactly the way I'd put it. But it's near enough. Well, John?" He looked up at the wall chronometer.

John Hawk was shaking his head. "I'd . . . I'd have to think about it. I know nothing of governing a city such as this. I am . . . or was . . . a simple sachem of a clan in the small town of Aberdeen."

"You are as experienced as anyone else," Milton Harmon told him. "And obviously a person of sincerity and integrity. The job is there to be done. Who would do it better?"

DeRudder came to his feet and said to Nadine Pond and Harmon, "We'll have to get along to the company meeting. I suggest we leave John to his considerations, and expect a reply from him in the morning."

The other two stood as well, and shortly the three of them were gone.

John sat for a long time before finally leaving his own seat and making his way to the kitchenette.

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He stood over the auto-serve and inserted his duplicate of DeRudder's credit card into the slot and dialed Pharmacy.

He said into the screen, "Please let me have one dosage of antisoma."

John of the Hawks left the apartment and descended the gravity lift to the street level. He turned right and, ignoring the public transportation, headed by foot in the direction of the river front.

New Sidon's defensive walls came down to the river edge and John strolled along the inner side of them, attracting no particular attention. It was as DeRudder and the others had said, this was, or was rapidly becoming, a city of Caledonians.

He passed an alleyway and a voice hissed, "John of the Hawks!"

Without immediately turning, he looked up and down the street. All seemed clear. He reversed his way and entered the darker passage.

"Don of the Clarks!"

They embraced in the manner of clansmen who had taken the blood oath.

"How long have you waited?" John said.

"I but arrived."

Don was attired in the same type coverall worn by John himself, but was considerably soiled. He said, sourly, "It is not the cleanest way in the world—through the sewers."

John said, "And your report?"

The other's eyes gleamed excitement. "All is ready. The clansmen have gathered there in the hills to the west, riding their fastest steeds. We filtered in, in small groups, and are hidden in the caves and rocks. There is no sign that we have been detected."

"They have devices that can locate a man simply by his body heat."

"So we know. However, we had herdsmen drive in large bodies of cattle before us, and now they graze in the same vicinity. Their devices do not detect a *man*, but animal heat. That of a cow, sheep, or horse, is no different from a man. It is our belief that thus far we have cozened them."

John took a deep breath. "What else?"

"We have selected thirty to come through the sewers. All are armed with the weapons of Beyond which we have captured. All are our top clansmen from the three confederations; sagamores, caciques and top raiders all. At whatever time you name, we will come through." He brought forth charts of the immediate surroundings and of the town and stabbed with a large forefinger. "We will divide into three bodies. One will dominate the landing field where the vehicles of the sky are kept. All of these will be flamed down, so there will be no escape and no participation on their part in the fight."

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"And the other two groups?"

"The two-gun emplacements, on the towers at the corners of the town farthest from the river. These will be knocked out. Then we fire our signal into the air and the clansmen ride at full speed from the hills. There will be no laser rifles available to be brought to bear on them, before they have reached the walls. They will be up and over and in the streets with carbine, claidheammor and skean before the cursed Sidonians know what is about."

John of the Hawks took another deep breath. "And then what, Don of the Clarks?"

"Why, then we will slay them. We will loot the city of all that is worthy of looting. The women and children we will take to serve as clanless ones in our towns."

"And the Caledonians here?"

"They are slinks and traitors. They will share the fate of the men from Beyond. This the supreme muster of the three united confederations has decided."

"And then?" John pursued. "New Sidon is but one of the cities the men from Beyond have built."

Don was scowling at him. "Why, then we'll go on to the next. Probably to Berkeley. And we'll sack it, in turn."

John was shaking his head. "No. Once, we might succeed, though many will go down to black death in the attempt. These from Beyond are not slinks, Don of the Clarks. Many of their ways are not ours, but they are not slinks. They will fight and fight hard for their women and children, their property and their lives. The word will go out to their other cities. Once warned, they will not be cozened again."

"You sound strange, John of the Hawks. This was basically your plan. It was you who devised the elaborate play acting in which you were supposedly stripped of your kilt, so that you could enter this city and spy upon the Sidonians. It was you who called for the union of confederations and the attack."

"I have learned much in the past few days, Don. If we are successful, and admittedly, we have excellent chance, they will mount further, stronger reprisals against our Phyla. Their skimmers will seek out the smallest hamlet and flame it down, as Aberdeen was flamed down. It is a battle that we cannot win, no matter how brave the clansmen, no matter how staunchly our womenfolk back our efforts. It is a battle that cannot be won, for we are simple herdsmen and farmers and they are advanced and as numerous as the blades of grass on the heath. In this League of theirs they have more planets than we have towns on all Caledonia."

The lips of Don of the Clarks drew back over his teeth.

"What has *happened* to you, John of the Hawks?"

"Perhaps I have grown a bit wiser."

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"You will not aid us in the coming battle?"

"There will be no coming battle, Don."

The clansman's eyes narrowed. "The plan can and will go through without you, John."

John shook his head. "No. It all depends upon surprise and your advance raiders coming through the sewers. If warned, the Sidonians would easily repulse you."

"If warned!"

"Return to the clansmen, Don of the Clarks, and tell them that I, once Supreme Raid Cacique of the Loch Confederation, have joined with the men from Beyond and will soon enter the government of the city. Say that I urge that all the clans that have thus far taken to the hills and fought the new ways make their peace with the men of the League."

He looked away, as though unseemingly, into a far distance. "In the long run, though perhaps you and I will not live to see it, that is the shortest path to Caledonia regaining of her liberty."

There was suddenly a skean in Don of the Clark's right hand. "You will not betray us, John! You who were my bloodbrother, but have now turned slink and discarded your own kilt!"

John took a quick step back and went into a fighter's crouch, his hands extended slightly forward. "I am unarmed, Don of the Clarks."

Don came in slowly, alertly. No one knew better than he the fighting qualities of John of the Hawks.

John tensed, his eyes narrow, his hands extended a bit farther out.

And Don of the Clarks came to a halt, stood erect and tossed the dagger aside.

"I cannot do it," he said simply. "You are my bloodbrother and have saved my life an untold number of times. How would the town criers shout this, were I to kill you?"

John put his hand out and to the other's shoulder. "I do what I must do, Don of the Clarks."

"I know. I do not understand, but I trust you." He looked down at his feet in disgust. "It would have been the greatest raid of all times. The bards . . ."

"The bards," John said sourly, "would have sung themselves hoarse."

He reached into a coverall pocket and fetched forth a small box. "When you return, Don of the Clarks, give this to Alice of the Thompsons. Be sure she takes it. On your honor as my bloodbrother, be sure she takes it."

Don frowned down at the packet.

"And tell her," John said, "that somehow, some day, I will come to pay the brideright to the Clan Thompson and honorably steal her for my bride." ■

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J.W.C.

ROCKETS, MISSILES, AND MEN IN SPACE

By Willy Ley • The Viking Press, New York • 1968 • 557 pp. • $10.95.

This is the fifth version of the definitive historical source book on rocketry and astronautics originally published under the simple title, "Rockets," in 1944. Originally,

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more than fifty percent of it was prediction; in the current revision, it is nearly all historical. In a mere quarter of a century, the dreams have become realities. The reason is simple: My generation read Ley's original book and proceeded to make it happen.

In the past twenty-four years, things have happened so fast in rocketry and astronautics that it was downright difficult, if not impossible, for Willy Ley to continually up-date his basic book to keep pace with the newspaper stories. But, lest one think that there is nothing left to dream about in astronautics, Ley points out quite carefully that there is no proper ending to the story he has chronicled. Now, there is the Moon to explore . . . then the planets . . . then the stars. "The exploration of space will go on forever and ever . . ." ends the current volume.

As it has been for the past quarter-century, Ley's book will continue to be the basic reference work on astronautics. Many people still believe that rocketry started with the V-2 and that nothing really happened until October 4, 1957. Nothing could be further from the truth. The importance of Ley's book is its ability to provide scope and perspective to what we are doing in space.

For we cannot adequately plan and talk about and write about where we are going unless we know where we have been.

This book, representing Willy Ley's quarter century of highly important contribution to astronautics, needs to be on every s-f reader's and writer's library shelf—because astronautics started off as s-f and became reality. And there will be other s-f subjects that will follow suit, so it may be important to know how and why astronautics progressed from these pages to Cape Kennedy.

G. Harry Stine

HAUSER'S MEMORY

By Curt Siodmak • G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York • 1968 • 184 pp. • $4.95

I'd have sworn that "Donovan's Brain," in which a criminal's brain is preserved and telepathically takes over person after person, was a novelette in an early issue of *Amazing Stories* before it became book length. However, I can't find it in Day's *Index* so I must be wrong. Now, after a good few years, the scientist hero of the earlier book is back again meddling with brains.

The Dr. Patrick Cory, who is experimenting with memory RNA in this book, doesn't much resemble the classic mad scientist who removed Donovan's brain and wished he hadn't. Now he is a Nobel laureate, persuaded by the CIA to try to salvage the memory of a German scientist who has defected from Russia and has been tracked down and almost killed. But Haus-

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er's personality goes with his memory in the injected RNA, and the human guinea pig who finds himself two men sets out on a mysterious quest. This part is pure Hollywood, and I am sure the author—screen writer and director, here as in prewar Germany—has his script written and is planning to film the play in Copenhagen, Germany and Prague.

This would be a better book than "Donovan's Brain" if so much hadn't been written in the past twenty-odd years.

PENDULUM

By John Christopher • Simon and Schuster, New York • 1968 • 254 pp. • $4.95

English writers, from H. G. Wells to J. G. Ballard, have had a fondness for catastrophe. Poor old England has been destroyed again and again, and Everyman has struggled through, battered and bowed to tell the tale. In our time, John Christopher has been one of the most diligent and efficient practitioners of this world's end theme, from his classic "No Blade of Grass" down to the recent "The Ragged Edge" with its drained-off seas. This time it is social rather than physical catastrophe that torments the beleaguered isle: a takeover by its teen-agers.

The theme is almost the same as that of the recent film, "Wild in the Streets," but drabber and grimmer. The non-student organizers of student insurrections decide to broaden their power base by bringing in the street gangs, the motorcycle mobs, the "yobs" from the slums. And the yobs take over.

Shifting back and forth from one member to another of an English middle-class family, we watch society crumble under the attack. The revolt of the young synchronizes with economic collapse, but there appear to be no racist elements in the situation. And the final revolt against the gangs leaves an even more hopeless situation.

It's scarey: you can see the seeds of just this situation around you anywhere. But Anthony Burgess did it more subtly and tellingly in "A Clockwork Orange." That book was savage; this is only despairing.

ASHES, ASHES

By René Barjavel • Translated by Damon Knight • Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N. Y. • 1967 • 215 pp. • $3.95

René Barjavel is said to be the foremost present-day French science-fiction writer, and this his "classic" novel. It's the French contribution to the current catastrophe school of SF, to which the English have been making so many contributions of late. It also, at least in the earlier chapters, reads like a pastiche of Jules Verne. Once the catastrophe is in progress, it settles down to a grim but lively adventure yarn.

The setting is Paris of 2052.

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The heroine is a beautiful country girl about to be made into a great star by a slavering producer. The hero is her farmboy friend, coming to Paris to go to college. (The producer—who fortunately doesn't live long—gets him blackballed.) All this part is meticulously described in classic Verne manner.

Suddenly all kinds of unconnected cataclysms and catastrophes clobber poor Paris, and by inference, the world. The Emperor Robinson, black ruler of all South America, comes on worldwide TV to announce that his nuclear missiles are on their way to wipe out the North Americans, who threw his people out at gunpoint, sometime very soon now. Simultaneously—and with no implied or mentioned connection that I detected—all electrical, magnetic and radioactive forces disappear, most metals lose their molecular cohesion—but not consistently—the solar output heads for a new peak, and civilization collapses. No food, no water, no power, no transportation. In the ensuing bloody free-for-all Paris begins to burn—then all the rest of France except the rural haven in Provence for which our young couple and their friends are headed. Finally we get a little section in which, in their old age, they have founded an antiscientific society.

If this is French science fiction, it's easy to see why more of it hasn't been published in English.

THE SCREAMING DEAD BALLOONS

By Philip McCutcheon • John Day Co., New York • 1968 • 224 pp. • $4.50

The use of mad-scientist and save-the-world themes in the spy and mystery field has in recent years reached and probably exceeded their popularity in the post World War I years of Sax Rohmer and his contemporaries. There are far too many of them for me to read, let alone report on, the best of them. Some day they will be grist for collectors who will wonder plaintively why we didn't keep 'em.

Anthony Boucher considered the stories about Commander Shaw, the British Navy's answer to James Bond, much better than the "007" series. Be that as it may, this one goes well over the borderline as its villain, Dr. Zan, dredges extra-terrestrial fungi out of the sea off the Brazilian coast and nurtures them to world-destroying malignancy in his underground laboratories deep in the swamps of the jungles of Amazonas. Shaw, broken out of his old job for loose living, is enlisted by a beautiful Russian agent into a civilian international espionage corps, 6D2, which is dedicated to the destruction of Zan's GRASP. Soon they are shooting and being shot at, captured and escaping, watching the "mycetons" roll over defenseless villages and flay their inhabitants alive—very temporarily: you can't live long

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with no skin. Meanwhile, Zan is about to loose his "screaming dead-smelling ballons" on London, with Shaw ten thousand miles away. Poor London.

PAVANE

By Keith Roberts • Doubleday & Co., Garden City, N.Y. • 1968 • 279 pp. • $4.95

Here is a product of the English SF renaissance that is by no means an example of New Wave froth. The author has created a rich alternate world in which—among other differences that must begin farther back than the prologue suggests—Elizabeth I was assassinated, the Armada conquered England, and the world of the next several centuries was dominated by Spain and the Church of Rome.

We see that other England in six stories that begin in our own time and carry the interwoven lives of some people of Dorset on into the future. As events some time in their past have produced a continuum radically different from ours, so in each story other events create crisis points which shape their future. In the first story Jesse Strange, young heir to a line of road trains, is jilted by a barmaid for whom he has named his newest engine, the *Lady Margaret*. This is a world in which the Church deliberately restricts technology to hold its temporal kingdom on a manageable level—but other forces are fermenting, and we see them in the other stories. A boy enters and dies in the semaphore operators' guild. A fishergirl glimpses a freer outside world. An artist-priest sickens at the tortures of the Holy Inquisition and leads a revolt. Another Margaret, daughter of the first, links the merchant kingdom of the Stranges with the local nobility. And, finally, her daughter defies the Church and catalyzes a Holy War against England.

It's a rich, thoughtful, beautiful tapestry which even Americans should find strong and real.

THE DOOMSDAY MEN

By Kenneth Bulmer • Doubleday Co., Garden City, N. Y. • 1968 • 207 pp. • $4.50

When I met Kenneth Bulmer in 1955 he was England's foremost science-fiction fan, brought over to the Cleveland SF convention by the Transatlantic Fan Fund. He was one of many young beginning or would-be writers on both sides of the Atlantic—writers like Robert Silverberg and Harlan Ellison. Like them he has driven steadily ahead, writing, learning, growing steadily better. A good many of his books have had paperback editions in the United States—probably after "hardback" publication in Britain—but I think this is his first hardcover book over here. It's a good one.

The central gimmick, the Ridforce, could once have carried a book all by itself, with the barest

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embellishment of color and incident. It is an electronic technique which permits police officers to link themselves mentally with murder victims and relive the crime and the events leading up to it. They can see the killer and, hopefully, know why he has killed. The experience is a traumatic one; the operator must almost literally be dragged back from beyond death. But Kenneth Bulmer doesn't stop there. His novel is about what Ridforce does to one operator, Robin Carver, and the men and women he works with . . . what it does to the society in which it is so important an element. If melodrama obtrudes a bit in the latter chapters, what matter? For every stress there is strain, building in the darkness until something bursts. And bursting makes a book move.

PICNIC ON PARADISE

By Joanna Russ • Ace Books, New York • No. H-72 • 157 pp. • 60¢

With this book Joanna Russ' tough little heroine becomes totally puzzling. When we first encountered her in Damon Knight's "Orbit" collections, she was a female counterpart of Robert E. Howard's sword-and-sorcery hero, Conan—or perhaps of Fritz Leiber's more human and believable Grey Mouser. She lived in a never-never land which could be anywhere and anywhen that never was.

Somewhere along the line, in stories that I haven't read or that haven't been written, she got herself transported to Bronze Age Tyre and was there picked up and trained as an agent of the Trans-Temporal Military Authority, then tossed into the far future to rescue a bunch of tourists trapped on a hostile planet by a commercial war. From there it's "only" a conventional yarn about the trek of a group of tenderfeet through a hostile environment, hunted by Bad Guys and shepherded by the Wise Old Guide. "Last of the Mohicans" moved to the future. But Alyx and her tourists are a complex and perplexing lot, and the verities of the formula get some violent treatment before they are out of trouble.

Alyx is tough, but she's neither Conan nor the Mouser. Howard's hero would bore her, but I'd like to see her in Nehwon and Lankhmar.

RITE OF PASSAGE

By Alexei Panshin • Ace Books, New York • No. A-16 • 254 pp. 75¢

This is the book that Heinlein's "Podkayne of Mars" should have been and could have been. Since the author made the long, detailed study of Heinlein's books, "Heinlein in Dimension," published by Advent, it may be no coincidence that in his own first novel he has doggedly eliminated most of the faults he pointed out in Podkayne.

Mia Havero is one of the crew

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of a starship, one of seven self-contained worlds that were built to ferry refugees from Earth to colony planes and have perpetuated their capsule societies for centuries. When they reach fourteen the ship's young are dropped on one of the colonial worlds, to survive for a month amongst its terrors—if they can. However, Mia's eventual experiences during her rite of passage are really the least of the book. She is a prickly, opinionated, hardnosed person and we get to know her pretty well during the few years leading up to the Trial. We also get to know her ship-world as it looks to her, her society and its strong and weak points, and to understand the rift between the ships and the co'onists which comes to a head during her final Trial.

It's an auspicious debut by anyone's standards.

DRAGONFLIGHT

By Anne McCaffrey • Ballantine Books, New York • No. U-6124 • 309 pp. • 75¢

If you think you read this here in Analog last year, you didn't—not all of it, by quite a bit. The first third is, indeed, the Hugo-winning novelette, "Weyr Search," with little or any change, but the sequel, "Dragonrider," was a substantially condensed version of the present book.

The whole thing is certainly one of the best SF books of 1968 and should be a contender for awards in '69. If you read the two Analog stories, you know that it creates a feudal society on a far world in which an elite class have developed a strange symbiotic relationship with the intelligent, telepathic, indomitable "dragons." As the monsters hatch, young Dragonriders must pair with them for life . . . and a very special kind of woman is needed to pair with a new dragon queen. In the first part of the book, Lessa of Ruatha is found; in the remaining two thirds she grows into her destiny and purpose—to defend Pern when the terrible plague of Threads recurs after four centuries' lapse.

If you didn't read the stories in Analog, read the book. If you did, read them again. "Dragonflight" is probably the most striking yarn to originate here since the "Dune" novels.

ASSIGNMENT TO NOWHERE

By Keith Laumer • Berkley Books, New York • No. X-1596 • 143 pp. • 60¢

This is a companion to the author's 1962 yarn, "Worlds of the Imperium," which Ace has around—if you can find it—as No. M-165, for forty-five cents. If you haven't read the earlier book, try to find it. If you have, you know that Laumer has taken the alternate-time-track theme completely apart and knit a sweater out of the strands. Time in the worlds of the Imperium rather resembles a plate

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of spaghetti, in which a kind of temporal plague—the "Blight"—is spreading like a blob of thin tomato sauce. Probabilities change, stories disappear out of magazines, whole histories vanish into limbo. Agents of the galactic Imperium, which exists in the most stable of the world lines, are trying to protect their own continuum by stopping the raveling of the universal fabric. Other agents are trying to control the process for their own ends.

Johnny Curlon, a Florida fisherman who is a descendant of Richard Coeur de Lion in our isolated and backward strand of happenstance, is caught up in this network of plot and counterplot and whisked off among the alternate worlds. Laumer nicely rationalizes the concept of persons, places and things of power that are an essential part of magical lore. Curlon, of course, is such a person—sometimes the original Richard, sometimes his brother John . . . who is sometimes beheaded and sometimes lives to defeat the barons and trample on the Magna Carta.

Then there is an unstable fragment of a world, somewhere in the midst of the Blight, where a girl and a gryphon guard a fragment of the first Richard's great sword. Johnny and the villainous Baron van Roosevelt go to retrieve it, and all hell breaks loose. The problem then converts into a mad race to keep the whole plate of spaghetti from being dumped into a mixer.

Brion Bayard of the earlier book has a sort of spear-carrying part in this one. He rescues Johnny once, then stands aside and is of no particular help to anyone, including himself. There were two Bayards in "Worlds of the Imperium." Maybe this is a third.

DEATHWORLD 3

By Harry Harrison • Dell Books, New York • No. 1849 • 188 pp. 60¢

The new title conceals—without credit—the serial which was called "The Horse Barbarians" when it ran here in Analog last year. There is a good cover, but I miss the original illustrations.

If you remember, this is the one in which Jason dinAlt finds a world that is tough enough to challenge and interest his very hard friends from "Deathworld"—the deadly planet Pyrrus whose feedback makes it absolutely hopeless as a home. Felicity is almost as deadly as Pyrrus—at least, its people are—but by no means hopeless. Problem: to change the society of the barbarian tribesmen rapidly enough and basically enough so that outsiders can get a toehold.

If you know the author, you know the situation is no pushover. He makes the most of it, very enjoyably. The book isn't award material, but a lot of people should enjoy it if they missed the magazine version.

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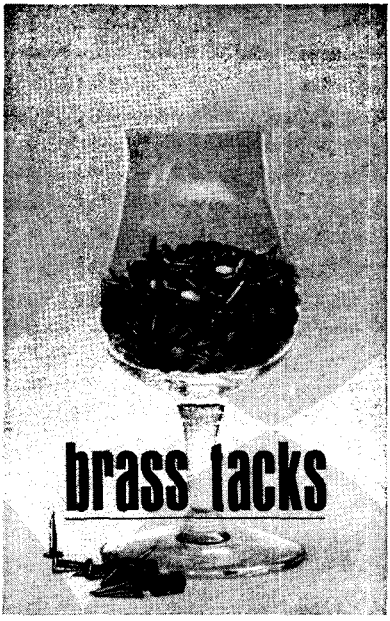

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I was delighted to see the article on steamers by Wallace West in the September issue. A long-time advocate of steam myself—much to the chagrin of most of my acquaintances—I was pleased to learn of its recommendation as one solution to the air-pollution problem.

I am afraid, however, that the proponents of steam will have a long uphill battle in spite of the opinions of the Morse Panel and the apparently successful venture of the Williams brothers.

The State of Illinois, for instance, has a statute prohibiting the operation of a steam vehicle on the public highways by someone other than a Licensed Steam Engineer. This is a law of long standing and any attempt to repeal it no doubt, would be firmly opposed. Presumably by the same interests—need they be named—that got such a law on the books in the first place.

After all, it is "common knowledge" that a steam car is dangerous. They have been known to blow up, they run out of water every fifty miles or less, and worst of all—especially in this age of frantic haste—they required at least fifteen minutes to get up a head of steam.

These are some of the old arguments one still hears today from the IC adherents. And it doesn't do any good to explain that all of these "faults" were either myth, or resolved over forty years ago with the advent of the flash boiler and the condenser-radiator.

For example, the 1926 Doble—a great name in steam, too—could raise 710 PSI operating pressure in less than sixty seconds. The 30 gallon water tank was good for 750 miles. It would do 60 MPH at a motor speed of 900 RPM and could attain a top speed of 95. Granted the fuel consumption left something to be desired, 8-11 MPG, but it didn't have to be thirty-eight cents a gallon fuel.

That's just one sample of the steam transportation of forty years ago. And there were many others just as good or better. Anyway,

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many thanks for running the article.

By the way, in reference to the aforementioned law on steam vehicles: Does the operator of a modern diesel locomotive classify as a Steam Engineer and if so, how?

R. E. GARDNER
405 S. Morris Avenue
Bloomington, Ill. 61701

Since IC engines operate by a series of explosives, shouldn't anyone driving such a car be a licensed Explosives Engineer?

Dear Mr. Campbell:

The recent assassination of Robert F. Kennedy has only reinforced my impression of the extent the regrettable series of Supreme Court decisions have influenced the press and politicians of this country. When the mayor of Los Angeles, and the combined reporting staffs of the three major television networks feel obliged to refer to an assassin, whose crime was witnessed by almost the entire population of this and most other nations on television, as the "suspect," in fear of damaging his chances for conviction, something is seriously wrong. I believe that it is the attitude of our judiciary that the rights of the criminal are more important than the rights of Society. I hope that this trend will be reversed by the successful blocking by Congress of two more judges who hold this attitude, and by the appointing of more realistic judges by a hopefully more conservative successor.

JAMES R. VOGUS
3547 Lake Avenue
Rochester, New York 14612

Jack Ruby did this nation a real favor; if he hadn't shot Oswald the man could never have been tried under present doctrines!

Dear Mr. Campbell:

There is an article in the May-June issue of *Antique Automobile*—published by The Antique Automobile Club of America, Inc. of Hershey, Pennsylvania—by R. M. Stewart who restored the oldest known auto in this country, the Taylor steamer. Mr. Taylor built and ran his car sometime around 1867. The fuel was common stove wood and it was carried under the seat. The car was ill-fated as the public did not take it seriously and it became a subject of ridicule. It was wrecked going down a hill; it did not have brakes.

W. G. BLISS
422 Wilmot
Chillicothe, Illinois 61523

Speaking of oldies—the first powered flight was not that of the Wright Brothers—it was a steam-powered airplane!

Dear John:

This will amuse you.

Rather too many years ago, when I was running to New York during the Second World War, you

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talked to me about what was then a fascinating novelty—radar. You found it amusing that one of the most important components—the wave guide—was plumber's work, not that of a highly qualified electronics technician. Somehow that little piece of information stuck in my memory.

A few days ago, in Burnie, Tasmania, my highly qualified young gentlemen were clambering around the platform between the samson posts on which the scanner is located, servicing the motor of same. One of them contrived to clutch the wave guide and, a foot-long section came away in his hand. (There was evidence of an old fracture, which would account for the faulty performance of the equipment in the past.) There is no radar technician in the port of Burnie, and, as the vessel was due to sail in a few hours, there was alarm and despondency among my officers, who came with very long faces to tell me the sad story.

I said, "Send for a plumber."

"Send for a *plumber,* sir?"

"You heard me."

The radar is now working really well.

A. BERTRAM CHANDLER
Cell 7
Tara Street
Woollahra, N.S.W. 2025

You never can tell when an odd comment will bear sound fruit! Chandler is a merchant marine captain.

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I just finished James Schmitz's serial "The Tuvela," which I found first rate; however, this leads indirectly to a complaint I have against a majority of current science-fiction writers here in the United States. With only one exception which I remember, all measurements were in the Anglo-American system rather than in the metric. Right now, those nations *not* using the metric system are few; and, the likelihood that there will be any nations using anything else during the first decade of the twenty-first century is extremely small. The United States is the last major holdout, and there is serious consideration of a change-over.

And, it is unlikely that the present form of the Gregorian calendar will continue long in use. Ultimately, there will be a smooth transition over to what has been called the "World Calendar." I doubt if I would have to describe this unchanging, equal quarter system either to you, Mr. Campbell, or to a majority of the readers of Analog.

Of course, it all boils down to the assumption by most of the writers of current science-fiction, that certain aspects of our twentieth century will continue without change or modification. If anything, there will be profound changes. Among other things, there might arise an American Mustafa Kemal Ataturk to wipe the present

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system of writing the English language and enforce the institution of another one. (At one stroke, almost everyone is illiterate, and even PhD's must begin with their primers again to learn how to read and write in, say, Neo-Cyrillic script, which is a system, by the by, proposed by Dr. Mario Pei of Columbia.)

ANNA PERENNA

P. O. Box 1873

Houston, Texas 77001

While I agree with you in full—our here-now readers are Anglo-American who've grown up thinking in miles, feet and Fahrenheit. Tell them the temperature is 42° and they automatically have a shivery feeling.

They aren't living in the future!

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Amen to Laurence Gould on "The Horse Barbarians," and the same goes for James Schmitz's "The Tuvela," which I found one of the best yarns Schmitz has ever done, and definitely of Hugo quality—fans, remember that when next year's nominations come up!

For you and Gould and all other friends of science fiction who are fed up with the campaign by the Literatures to impose the sick, anti-heroic, et cetera, standards of the "mainstream" upon our genre, a message:

Deliverance is at hand!

Under the leadership of First Speaker Lester del Rey, the Second Foundation has been created—a movement dedicated to the restoration in science fiction of romanticist principles of storytelling, the vision of science and the sense of wonder.

The Second Foundation is a broad-based movement, and welcomes the support of any and all fans who agree with our general principles. We believe that the majority of fans do not want the nihilism of the "New Thing," and believe instead in the canons of storytelling as exemplified by such greats as Heinlein and Asimov, and by current Analog standbys like Anderson and Schmitz.

We call upon fans of good will to wage Holy War against the anti-science fiction of the "New Thing"—a war that must be fought with pens and typewriters and lung power. Fans of good will can turn the tide, and rout the Quislings of the "mainstream"—if only they will act.

Fans of good will—stand up for science fiction! Let your voices be heard! Get the message through—to writers, editors, publishers and critics. Our cause is just—let us unite, and victory shall be ours!

JOHN PIERCE

But heroes are so hard to live with—they keep making one ask this question: "So why don't I do as well?"

Anti-heroes, on the other hand, make for a comforting sense of smugness.

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Dear Mr. Campbell:

With regard to Mr. Deal's letter on technological innovation in the August Analog, may I point out that the Romans were great on adopting other peoples ideas, and were constantly introducing new weapons and tactics. It's just that Hollywood thinks that no one would recognize a legionnaire who did not have a banded cuirass, rectangular shield, pilum and short thrusting sword, all of which items, by the way, were lifted from nations they came in contact with.

For example, by the end of the fourth century, he could have had a big round shield, no body armor, a long cutting sword or ax, and a number of lead-weighted and feathered throwing darts. Instead of fighting in line with six-foot intervals, he changed to dense columns, supported by large numbers of archers, slingers and even primitive crossbows.

This was the culmination of a continuous process of change, as the state met new types of enemies.

Cavalry evolved even more, and finally formed about a third of the army. It appears that some kinds *did* adopt the stirrup. Contact with the Sarmatians, who did use it, led to similar Roman units of Contarii, and Ammianus Marcellinus description of the very heavily armored Cataphractarii and Clibanarii implies that they had it.

Other cavalry had powerful composite bows, javelins or a handy short spear.

First line cavalry units ranked even before Palatine Legions.

This readiness to accept new military ideas probably stemmed from the fact that nearly all emperors were first successful generals, and that they mainly had short reigns due to civil war or assassination. In spite of Gibbons' theme, the system worked, and the later Roman army was, if anything, more successful than the earlier.

Actually, the easiest way to change an army is to defeat it. If the British had had things all their own way in the War of Independence, they would not have entered the Napoleonic Wars with light cavalry, galloping artillery, light infantry, rifle units, time-fused shrapnel shell, congreve rockets, and line infantry trained to fight in two deep lines instead of the normal three. They would have lost without these things, and Napoleon would have extinguished freedom in Europe.

If the British had not suffered from skilled riflemen in the Boer Wars, they would not have faced the Germans in 1914 with khaki clothing, and every man able to fire twenty aimed rounds a minute from a bolt-action rifle.

If they had not been beaten by inferior Japanese forces in the Malayan jungle, they would not have become masters of that environment and been able to clear up Communist insurgencies and Indo-

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nesian invasions during the last few years.

If their under-gunned tanks had not been roughly-handled by Rommel in the desert, then there would have been no need to design the Centurion that left Russian tank wrecks littered around Sinai last year, nor its 105mm gun and APDS ammunition, since sold to America and Germany for their main battle tanks.

It's always easier to change a losing team than a winning team.

P. BARKER

99 Brentford Road
Kings Heath
Birmingham 14, England

If you win, that proves you're right—so why change.

If you almost suffer defeat—you have a chance to change, and damn well know you have to!

Dear Mr. Campbell:

I realize that it's been quite a number of months since Bob Shaw invented "slow glass" and began examining the implications of it, but it's taken me up till now to find a flaw in his neatly constructed yarn "Burden of Proof." Judge Harpur will, happily, never be faced with the problem of a crime committed before a piece of long-term slow glass. Mainly, even if the stuff is ever developed it will never be used because it will be outlawed instantly with severe penalties for possession.

One square meter of slow glass left in sunlight for one year will absorb 1 x 10^{10} calories: roughly ten tons of TNT. Shaw says that the piezoelectric patterns that store the energy instantly randomize under impact or ultrasonics. Presumably, this releases the energy.

This sort of thing isn't going to replace fusion bombs, but just imagine li'l old, fun-loving, practical-joker me standing on the street corner and sweeping that line of homes with the beam from my portable ultrasonic projector . . .

Easiest long-range mass murder technique ever developed.

PAUL BLASS

4927 N. Boudinot Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19120

L. Sprague de Camp had that item many long years ago in one of his "Johnny Black" stories, wherein his Mad Scientist Methuen demonstrated that a Mad Genius, if genuinely mad and a genuine Genius, can't be confined. Methuen used a glass towel-rack bar.

But slow-glass made some lovely stories, didn't it?

Dear Mr. Campbell:

In the October issue of Analog, in Brass Tacks, a letter by Alex Krislov brought up the subject of cigarette smoking and lung cancer. He mentioned a statement you had made back in the April issue that South Africans, and Australians next, are the world's heaviest smokers of cigarettes, and yet these two —settled from England—have a

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far lower rate of lung cancer among their heavy smokers than England has among its nonsmokers. He also mentioned that "I think it would be fair to say that the combination of air pollution and smoking creates a high susceptibility to lung cancer."

Well, there's another factor in all of this. I've recently become interested in just what is "good nutrition," and naturally have begun reading the pertinent literature, particularly those of Lelord Kordel. And in several of his books, he brings up the subject of smoking and drinking. Now he says that most people do not realize that both these habits are "vitamin antagonists"; that is, that the substances taken in in smoke, or liquor, are actively destructive towards the vitamin substances the body needs. And H. Curtis Wood, Jr., M.D., in his book "Overfed but Undernourished," states that one cigarette destroys the Vitamin C content of an average orange. He further mentions that nearly all smokers—that have been checked for it—are low in Vitamin C—also lacking severely in the Vitamin B complex, which is associated with improper metabolism of fats; a possible explanation of the beginning of fat deposits in the arteries, and of the prevalence of coronary disease in heavy smokers. Possibly for nonsmokers, as well.

Thus, one point is: are the diets of the South Africans and Australians as high in vitamin and mineral-low white breads, rolls, and biscuits as in England. And what is their comparative consumption of protein foods, and fresh fruits and vegetables? I am not saying that a lack of certain vitamins or minerals will CAUSE lung cancer—in "Overfed but Undernourished," the author mentioned two separated areas in India, both areas' food supply deficient in the same substances. In one area, this manifests itself in early blindness. In the other, there is an equally high occurrence of early deafness. (Though, of course there is a slight overlap in disabilities.) The author's conclusion was that we do not inherit a "disease" from our family line, or gene pool; but that we each, according to our makeup, have "weak spots"—which could be structural, enzymatic, or neuronal—and in the stress put upon our bodies by improper nutrition—the "habit of a lifetime"—are most likely to show it at those spots. For instance, with diabetes approximately 1150% higher than at the turn of the century, how can you say that it is "inherited"; the gene pool is too large, too heterogeneous. Of course, one *could* have a sensitive sugar-metabolism system, one which would find it easy to "break down" under the daily oral influx of refined sugar. And even those with more capable systems—it is estimated that there is an immensely large section of the population who go their sugar-

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drenched way unaware that their bodies are being pushed around carelessly in a pre-diabetic condition.

One study I have been trying to find—if it has been done at all—is the incidence of ailments in two groups on a "normal" diet—with one group supplementing by various means the missing vitamins, minerals, enzymes, and amino acids. You see, it's quite easy to put the bite on smoking—when a large percentage of the population doesn't smoke; and easy to attack air and water pollution—after all, it's those big factories (and, of course, you don't mention a few hundred million combustion engines, *each* of which produces as much carbon dioxide as five million humans). But food—how do you get through to two hundred million that the fault may not be in their cigarettes as much as it is in themselves?

KATHLEEN COY
485 Hawkins Boulevard,
Copiague, New York 11726

The answer to your final question, history shows, is "You don't!"

Dear Mr. Campbell:

Let's not be in such a hurry to turn down Markham Gregory Robinson's suggestion—BRASS TACKS, October—about preserving samples of tissue from vital organs. You correctly pointed out that the cost of maintaining vital organs for everybody would be prohibitive. But the idea of having tissues available in case an entire organ is destroyed is a good one. So, why not merely take the samples and preserve them? When needed, they could be thawed out and cultured. Granted, this would nullify Robinson's idea of eliminating regeneration time in healing, but in many cases of disease or functional disorders, a prudent physician would have begun growing a new organ well in advance of the time it was required. Also, when a disorder occurs which affects cell growth, it would be highly desirable to have healthy tissue available from which to grow a replacement. With modern tissue-culture techniques, I would wager that tissue samples for every vital organ of an individual could be contained in an ordinary serology test tube, and include a respectable safety factor.

Writing this letter has brought me the sobering realization that I've been reading your darned magazine for over thirty years! I still remember the thrill I got from the cover for "Gray Lensman." Where is Rogers now? Anyway, it's been a good thirty years. As far as I'm concerned, you can keep the wheel for another thirty.

JOSEPH O. LAWSON
P.O. Box 235
Carson City, Nevada 89701

If I do keep it up for another thirty years, I'll need something like that tissue regenerations bank! Lessee—I'd be just shy of ninety in 1998!

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EDITORIAL
continued from page 5

would be a great number of news-media reporters, complete with color TV cameras, on national network prime time. (They did *not* riot during the washboard-weeper daylight hours; their full-color spectacular was reserved for prime time during the actual nominations, when there would be a maximum of viewers. They may be fools, but they're not stupid.)

They had come for the specific, declared purpose of holding a riotous fight with the police. That was what they came for—what they trained for in the parks in Chicago, with group leaders instructing them in ways and means, and coaching them in obscene and filthy practices guaranteed to annoy any self-respecting man to react. They had come for the purpose of causing a riot; they practiced methods of making certain they got what they wanted. Their leaders—the Mobsters—told them to cool it during the day—to avoid minor clashes with the police, to save themselves and their enthusiasm for the Big Push on prime-time color TV.

They *knew* they could get a fight; they planned and intended to carry out violent attack, and if they weren't stopped by violence somewhere along the way, to invade the Convention Hall and attack the delegates. That is, they had come to Chicago because the situation was such that the "Establishment" *could not possibly avoid being forced to use violence to stop them.* There was a target—the Convention Hall itself—which the Establishment absolutely had to protect.

The Republican convention had not presented an equivalent opportunity; held in Miami Beach, a sand-spit accessible only over a few readily defended and blockaded bridges, the mass-mob attack simply wasn't possible.

The Mobsters running the affair obviously used considerable generalship.

Naturally, with the conditions in Chicago being ideal for a mass-mob approach on the Convention Hall, with their plans announced to the press in advance, the police lined up to stop them—and the color TV and press reporters lined up to cover the story.

Sure it was a story—a terrific spectacle of violence and assault equivalent to a line drive by football teams with about two thousand players on each side. It had color, movement, action, excitement—it was a real, first-class TV spectacular. Having been publicized beforehand, the TV crews were able to set up their lights and their cameras in advance; the press people to get their reporters and photographers stationed—

And for some reason, the Chicago police didn't seem to show the proper respect for the sacred privi-

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leges of the Freedom of the Press.

Many years ago, in discussing Freedom of Speech, Supreme Court Justice Holmes pointed out that that does *not* include the freedom to stand up in a crowded theater and scream "Fire!". It doesn't include the freedom to deliberately and knowingly act to incite to riot, to aid and abet Mobsters organizing a riot —

In other words, it does not include the right of the press *to arrange to stage a spectacular story* for the amusement of their audience.

The battle cry of the Yippies was, I repeat: "The Whole World Is Watching!" It was *not* a cry for any desired goal—except the goal of being noticed.

The violent action concentrated, naturally, precisely where it would be most effective—get the most attention. Front and Center Stage—where the TV lights and cameras were pointing; where the whole world was watching.

The reason the Chicago police gave the press such a hard time was quite simple and rational—*the press was the cause of the worst riots.*

If the TV equipment had been set up out at the Chicago Stockyards, with lights and cameras—that's where the pre-arranged riot would have been held.

That, friends, was a sort of school play. The teachers gave the children their scripts, and told them how to play their parts, and arranged with the press for coverage, and then put on their exciting show. In prime time. On color TV. And they—goody! goody! goody! —got *attention!*

The press got a wonderful story, with lots of action and confusion.

Naturally, they didn't report its strictly-phony aspects, or that it was a setup arranged for the benefit of color TV and mentally and emotionally incompetent people who craved attention more than anything else imaginable. Such people don't mind getting beat up a bit—same principle why Junior will kick Mama in the shins now and then. He gets spanked, but he does get Mama's attention.

That riot, in other words, cou'd have been almost totally squelched by a very simple thing. Just keep the news media away from the scene—and the disappointed Yippies would have turned against their leaders, in all probability.

Sure, the police used violence; that was precisely what the Yippies intended to bring about. And don't for a moment kid yourself that they couldn't have forced the police to react to them with violence, no matter how restrained the police might be. The police did *not* have effective tranquilizer-darts; they would probably have caused serious infection if used, penetrating the filthy clothes and skins of the Yippies. They didn't have an ade-

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quate tranquilizer gas. Given those, the Yippies could have been removed quietly, and without violence.

But lacking those, the Yippies could always compel the police to use physical violence. Look, friend—at what point would *you* suggest violent force? When the Yippies swarmed into the Convention Hall? When they started yanking clothes off the delegates? When they started raping some of the girls?

Get it firmly in mind that *somewhere you have to draw a line.* And so long as that is true, anyone who specifically *wants* to start a fight can always compel you to meet his desire—he need only drive you beyond that line. So long as there is *anything* you will fight to defend—he can make you fight.

There is the tale of the peace-loving old Quaker, who, driven by a man knowing his opinions, finally said, his voice trembling, "Friend, I would not harm thee for all the world . . . but thou art standing where I am about to shoot!"

Q.E.D. People who *want* to start a fight can—always.

The Yippies came to Chicago for the purpose of having a fight—preferably on Color TV in prime time.

The news people cooperated one hundred percent with the Yippies, in every possible way—and naturally the police did not approve of the press. They gave the press a hard, and somewhat lumpy time—which naturally caused the press to turn all their powers loose on giving the police hell and hallelujah. Which they could do very simply by reporting a thoroughly one-sided view of the proceedings.

The Yippies got what they wanted—"The Whole World Is Watching *Us!*" hooray, hooray! The press got what they wanted—by cooperating with the Yippies, and refusing to cooperate with the peace-minded police. (So what's newsworthy about a peaceful march from one place to another? That won't fill an inch of copy—a minute of prime time.) They got a magnificently staged wild melee that made a great TV spectacular, and supplied fine pictures for the morning papers.

And the police. . . ?

They got the usual treatment.

And so did Supreme Court Justice Holmes' comment about shouting "Fire!" in a crowded theater.

What politician is going to bring the press down on his head by passing laws that limit their freedom to help incite riots?

That Chicago riot was a carefully staged performance—staged with the aid and collusion of the press, under the cover of "Freedom of the Press" to get a spectacular story.

Under the resulting conditions—with police trying to break up the press collaboration with the Yippies—you wouldn't expect the police to get a fair, objective, honest treatment in the press, would you?

The Editor.

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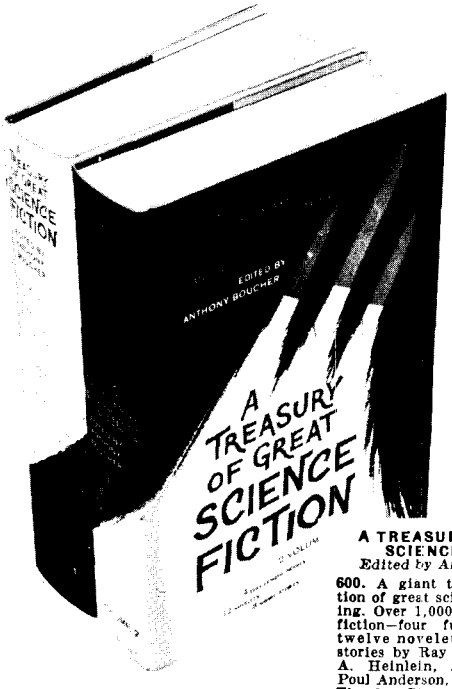

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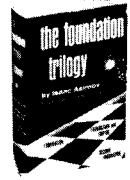

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